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14. ABSTRACT

This study is one component of the SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project. The larger study consisted of 21 focus groups conducted at units across the SOF community and several issue-oriented surveys conducted via the Web. This report presents findings from SOF personnel who responded to the SOF Operator Survey ($N = 899$) and unit leaders who responded to the Unit Leadership Survey ($N = 158$). In summary, unit leaders and SOF personnel agree that language training is essential for optimal mission performance but that the current state of language training is not meeting the needs of all personnel and missions. Also, language is not used in the same way depending on the SOF personnel type and the mission type. Implications are discussed.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
SOF, operators, unit leadership, language strategy, needs assessment, gap analysis, surveys, focus groups

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Special Operations Forces Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project: SOF Overall Survey Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel operate around the globe. Most SOF units are required to have multiple language capabilities and many SOF personnel have at least one required language to learn and maintain. Approximately 50% of the language billets in the Department of Defense (DoD) are in the SOF community. Given the increased operational demands of the *Global War on Terror* (GWOT), including the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the importance of having language-enabled SOF personnel with sufficient language skills to accomplish missions inside and outside their areas of responsibility (AOR) has never been more critical. SOF leaders must ensure that Soldiers, Airmen, and Sailors in the SOF community receive effective language training and resources to enable successful accomplishment of SOF tasks that require language skills. How do SOF leaders ensure that language resources are structured and utilized effectively to achieve this objective?

A comprehensive language strategy is needed to guide the allocation of resources to provide initial acquisition, sustainment, and enhancement training as well as tools and other resources across all SOF components. A recent U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report (2003) indicated that the current SOF language strategy was insufficient and that SOF needed a strategic plan for language capability. The first step in developing a strategy is assessing the current state. Data about the current state of language usage, proficiency, and training are required as well as projections of future mission requirements and training needs. This allows for *gap analysis* to inform strategic planning and resource allocation. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of current, comprehensive data on language usage and training effectiveness from the perspective of SOF personnel.

The Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) sponsored the *Special Operations Forces Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* to address this deficiency. This study collected current-state information about language usage, proficiency, training, and policy issues (e.g., Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, FLPP) from SOF personnel, SOF unit leaders, and other personnel involved in SOF language. The project used multiple data collection methods and was designed to provide SOFLO with valid data to develop a comprehensive language transformation strategy and to support language-related advocacy for the SOF perspective within the DoD community. This study consisted of 21 focus groups conducted at units across the SOF community and several comprehensive issue-oriented surveys conducted via the Web. The purpose of this report is to present findings from SOF personnel who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*[1] and unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey*.

Method

The *Special Operations Forces Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* included two primary data collection methods to achieve its objective: focus groups and surveys. The survey study was designed to collect data from SOF personnel, unit leaders, and instructors. Three comprehensive, issue-oriented surveys were developed and deployed on the Internet in late July 2004.

Although the surveys were deployed for a limited time, we received a fair response rate for an issue-oriented survey (i.e., a longer survey that focuses on incumbents who are subject matter

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[1] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

experts). The *SOF Operator Survey*[2] had 1,039 respondents and the *Unit Leadership Survey* had 158 respondents. Unfortunately, too few instructors participated ($n = 7$) to obtain interpretable results. Lack of Internet access, lack of an effective means to distribute the survey link to all SOF personnel (e.g., Navy), and project time constraints (i.e., shorter response window) impacted survey response. After removing any questionable respondent cases, there were a total of 899 respondents to the *SOF Operator Survey*[2]. A total of 41 respondents indicated that the Air Force was their branch of service, 857 respondents indicated that the Army was their branch of service, and only one respondent indicated the Navy as his branch of service.

Of the 41 respondents from the Air Force, the majority of respondents (29) were Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) personnel. The remaining respondents were classified as AFSOF other (this group included the following classifications: Military Intelligence (MI) Airmen assigned to a SOF unit, non-SOF linguists, SOF other, and non-SOF other).

Of the 857 respondents from the Army, 297 were SOF personnel, 56 were military intelligence organic to SOF units, 35 were SOF support or SOF other, and 325 were non-SOF language professionals. The remaining respondents (144) were categorized as other non-SOF respondents. Of the 297 Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) personnel, 118 indicated that they were Reserve Component (RC) personnel. The ARSOF personnel who responded were categorized as being SF, CA, or PSYOP personnel in active or reserve components. Of the 297 ARSOF personnel who responded, 120 were SF AC personnel, 48 were SF RC personnel, 14 were CA AC personnel, 46 were CA RC personnel, 45 were PSYOP AC personnel, and 24 were PSYOP RC personnel.

Of the 158 unit leadership respondents, 57 were unit commanders, 16 were senior warrant officer advisors/senior enlisted advisors (SWOA/SEAs), 58 were staff officers, and 27 were command language program managers (CLPMs). When we use the term unit leaders or leadership in this report, we are referring to this group collectively.

Considering the constraints of the situation, the type of survey (i.e., a long issue-oriented survey) and the demographic similarity of the sample to the SOF population, we believe the response rate is sufficient and that the data are a useful source of inference about language issues in the SOF community. Although this study clearly provides the best source of language-related data from SOF personnel and unit leaders, caution should be taken in applying the results of this study uniformly across all SOF units without first evaluating whether the findings are appropriate for the specific unit.

Summary of Survey Results

The findings from SOF personnel who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*[2] and unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey* are divided into ten major sections and a summary of the major findings from each section are presented below. More detailed findings can be found in each section of the report. It is important to note that the findings presented in this report are descriptive in nature and, therefore, this report does not provide extensive interpretation of findings or recommendations based on these findings. The *Final Project Report* which integrates data across all groups and data collection methods does provide interpretation and recommendations.

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[2] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

1. General Language Requirements

Responses given by CLPMs and SOF personnel for items in this section were very consistent. Both groups indicated 'Building rapport' as the most commonly used and most important language function while on deployment. Also, these groups designated 'Basic writing tasks' as the least frequently used and least important function of language while on deployment. Although there were some similarities between these two groups, there were also some important differences. Although CLPMs and ARSOF personnel agreed that the most important and frequently used function of language was 'Building rapport,' AFSOF personnel designated 'Military-technical vocabulary' as the most important and most frequently used. There were some other important differences between these groups. For example, CLPMs rated 'Giving commands' as more important and occurring more frequently than both ARSOF personnel and AFSOF personnel. AFSOF personnel indicated that this function was less frequent and was lower in importance than many of the other language functions. Also CLPMs rated 'Basic listening' tasks as less important and frequent than both AFSOF and ARSOF personnel, who rated this task as highly important and frequent. The majority of CLPMs and SOF personnel indicated that an 'Advanced Communication' level of proficiency, which represents a high level of proficiency, would be ideal for typical tasks and duties.

2. Mission-Based Language Requirements

Both unit leaders and SOF personnel indicated CAO and PSYOP missions as two of the most common tasks/missions on deployment inside of their AOR. AFSOF personnel primarily engaged in FID and CT tasks, while ARSOF personnel were assigned to PSYOP, CAO, FID, and UW tasks. Both SOF personnel and unit leaders indicated 'Building rapport' as the most important function of language proficiency, although all language functions were rated as important by unit leaders and SOF personnel. Both groups also indicated that a high level of proficiency would be necessary on missions. SOF personnel were asked to rate how frequently they used language and their preparedness for their most recent deployment. Although all SOF personnel indicated that they used language frequently, AFSOF personnel slightly agreed that they were prepared for their most recent deployment in terms of language and cultural understanding, while ARSOF personnel reported that they were not well prepared. Within ARSOF, RC personnel reported feeling less prepared than AC personnel.

Findings regarding outside AOR deployment were consistent with findings regarding inside AOR deployment for unit leaders. 'Building rapport' was rated the most important function of language for all subgroups as well as for RC personnel. Unit leaders responded negatively to items that described their personnel's proficiency and ability on deployments outside of their AOR. SOF personnel indicated that higher levels of proficiency were seen as more necessary for missions inside of the AOR than for missions outside of the AOR. SOF personnel also reported being less able to meet language-related requirements for missions outside of their AOR than for missions inside of their AOR. ARSOF personnel reported more difficulties with language outside of their AOR than AFSOF personnel.

3. Interpreters

Unit leaders and SOF personnel agreed that their units are highly dependent on interpreters. ARSOF personnel were more likely than AFSOF personnel to report frequent use of interpreters both inside and outside their AOR and to report that they were too dependent on

interpreters. ARSOF personnel were also slightly more likely than AFSOF personnel to indicate that they have observed situations where interpreters have compromised the mission outcome. Unit leaders were more likely to indicate experiencing problems with interpreters, while SOF personnel were somewhat more favorable in their views of interpreters. SOF personnel rated the interpreters that they used as moderately competent and trustworthy, and also strongly agreed that they were essential for mission success. RC unit leaders and personnel had stronger dependency on interpreters than AC leaders and personnel, as well as a higher indication of problems on missions due to interpreter usage. For outside-AOR missions, dependency on interpreters increased greatly, as did the frequency of use and positive evaluations of the interpreters.

4. Official Language Testing

Findings suggest that unit leaders and SOF personnel feel differently about official language testing. Many SOF personnel do not believe the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) is an accurate measure of their proficiency, while unit leaders indicated that the DLPT was a good indicator of proficiency. Both unit leaders and SOF personnel indicated that the DLPT was not related to what personnel do on deployment. Both SOF personnel and some members of unit leadership felt that the Defense Language Institute Oral Proficiency Interview (DLI OPI) was a better indicator of language proficiency. SOF personnel's attitudes toward the DLPT did not appear to influence their motivation to do well on the test. Unit leaders reported that they encourage personnel to do well on the DLPT and stay current with its requirements. SOF personnel's own test scores influenced their evaluation of the DLPT's relatedness to mission success, but not the seriousness with which they take the test. Exposure to the DLPT's alternative, the DLI OPI, did not have a large effect on their opinions, although personnel did evaluate the DLI OPI more positively than the DLPT.

5. Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP)

One can conclude from findings in this section that there are mixed attitudes regarding FLPP's ability to motivate and that the overall procedure for allocating FLPP is perceived as ineffective and in need of adjustment. The results indicated that increasing the amount FLPP would highly increase the motivating effect of FLPP, as stated in the findings from SOF personnel and unit leaders. SOF personnel also suggested that increasing time and resources for training would also increase the motivating effect of FLPP. Findings from unit leaders suggest that FLPP is not a sufficient incentive in motivating personnel in their command to maintain proficiency. In terms of the fairness of FLPP procedures, SOF personnel who have not received FLPP in the past four years provided more negative evaluations regarding the fairness of procedures for allocating FLPP. ARSOF RC personnel indicated very negative opinions regarding the fairness of FLPP procedures. SOF personnel overall disagreed that FLPP reflects the amount of time and effort that they put into language training.

6. Language Training

Initial Acquisition Language Training. SOF personnel and unit leaders expressed similar attitudes when evaluating initial acquisition language training. Unit leaders indicated that SOF personnel did not arrive at the unit mission-capable in their AOR language. In evaluating their initial acquisition language training, SOF personnel indicated that the instructor failed to adequately incorporate SOF considerations into his/her teaching. However, SOF personnel also indicated that their instructors were knowledgeable and

encouraged students to speak in the target language. Furthermore, unit leaders indicated that Soldiers who received training at DLI (Monterey) were more prepared than those who received training at USAJFKSWCS. The majority of SOF personnel who responded to the survey indicated that they received training at USAJFKSWCS, although some respondents indicated receiving training at DLI (Monterey). USAJFKSWCS students indicated that their instructors were less effective in preparing them to use language skills than DLI students.

In rating the curriculum, SOF personnel confirmed unit leaders' evaluation that students who received training at DLI were more prepared than those who received training at USAJFKWSCS. Students who received training at DLI evaluated their training more positively than students who received training at USAJFKSWCS. Students who received training at USAJFKSWCS also indicated that the curriculum did not cover their needs regarding mission-related vocabulary, that the materials contained frequent errors, and that there was more emphasis placed on 'Formal language' and less on 'Street/slang language.' Students who received training at DLI also indicated that the curriculum placed emphasis on the 'Formal language,' but also placed more emphasis on 'Slang/street language' than the curriculum at USAJFKSWCS.

Sustainment/enhancement Language Training. When evaluating sustainment/enhancement training, unit leaders reported that the training was important, but that there were too few resources available for this type of training. SOF personnel also agreed that they would put more effort into language training if the resources were more available. Unit leaders disagreed that the current OPTEMPO made sustainment/enhancement language training a less viable option. SOF personnel, on the other hand, believed that the two barriers they faced were the current OPTEMPO and a lack of training resources. A large percentage of SOF personnel (85.9%) indicated that they received sustainment/enhancement training in their unit. However, when responding to logistical questions regarding sustainment/enhancement language training, the majority of unit leaders indicated that immersion training would be the best mode of instruction for sustainment/enhancement training (See *Immersion Training* for more details). Furthermore, unit leaders disagreed that their unit has an effective CLP, but agreed that their chains of command needed to invest more time in sustainment/enhancement language training and that more money needed to be invested in the CLP.

SOF personnel and CLPMs also evaluated characteristics of the instructor and the curriculum in their CLP. While both SOF personnel and CLPMs expressed positive evaluations of the instructors in the CLP, these groups expressed different opinions when evaluating some aspects of the curriculum. SOF personnel disagreed that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations in his/her teaching objectives, while CLPMs strongly agreed that the curriculum is customized to consider SOF needs. However, CLPMs agreed that the primary focus of the curriculum was on speaking and SOF personnel indicated that their instructor encouraged students to speak in the target language.

Immersion Training. SOF personnel and unit leaders expressed positive attitudes regarding immersion training. Findings indicate that SOF personnel who have received immersion training and SOF personnel who have not received immersion training overwhelmingly agree that immersion is an effective way to acquire language. Unit leaders also expressed positive attitudes toward immersion training. Both SOF personnel and unit leaders agreed that OCONUS immersion training was more valuable than CONUS immersion training. Both groups also agreed that personnel's proficiency improved as a result of immersion training and that immersion training is the most effective way to acquire a language. Although results

indicated a very positive attitude toward immersion, most unit leaders indicated that their unit did not frequently engage in immersion training and the majority of SOF personnel reported that they had never participated in military-provided immersion training.

7. Attitudes toward Language Training and Proficiency

Overall, unit leaders indicated low-levels of confidence in the language abilities of their personnel. Based on a total of 157 potential respondents, less than half of all unit leaders indicated that their personnel were able to effectively perform a variety of language-related tasks. For example, only 37.3% of unit leaders indicated that their personnel were able to speak effectively and only 19.6% indicated that their personnel are able to use military or technical language effectively. SOF personnel were also not very confident in their language skills beyond the basic conversational level. SOF personnel indicated the lowest levels of confidence regarding their ability to use military language. AFSOF personnel indicated higher levels of confidence than ARSOF personnel, and within ARSOF, RC personnel were less confident than AC personnel.

When evaluating their most recent training experience in which they were deployed after language training, SOF personnel had neutral opinions regarding how well their training prepared them for mission success. SOF personnel who had received pre-deployment language training expressed the most negative opinions regarding the effectiveness of their training, while SOF personnel who received sustainment/enhancement language training before deployment rated their training somewhat better. Unit leaders also agreed that pre-deployment training was not effective in preparing personnel to do well on missions.

Despite the problems that SOF personnel reported with language training, they reported valuing language training and being motivated to do well. Both unit leaders and SOF personnel agreed that language training is essential for success on the job. SOF personnel also reported that they were highly motivated to do well so that they would perform well on the job and because they are accountable to their team. They reported that they were less motivated by the potential for receiving FLPP.

8. Use of Technology

SOF unit leaders and personnel indicated highly similar opinions regarding technology-delivered training (TDT) and machine language translation (MLT). Both groups deemed TDT unfit for the initial acquisition of a language and indicated that classroom training was more appropriate for this purpose. Furthermore, respondents indicated that TDT is used most effectively when supplementing classroom training and should not be used as a replacement for traditional classroom training. Unit leaders reported that TDT is not well-received by personnel and that personnel are reluctant to use it. However, SOF personnel indicated that they would be willing to try TDT even though the indicated that classroom training was more effective. SOF personnel indicated that trainees are more likely to utilize TDT when they are motivated and if it is scheduled, rather than on their personal time.

SOF unit leaders and personnel indicated largely negative opinions related to MLT. Both groups concluded that current MLT is ineffective and that it cannot replace language-trained personnel. Unit leaders reported more experience with MLT than SOF personnel, a finding especially pronounced for CLPM respondents.

9. Organizational Climate and Support

Both unit leaders and SOF personnel assigned low ratings (i.e., a large percentage of D's or F's) when rating their chains of command in terms of organizational support for language. Unit leaders were more likely to report favorable ratings of their unit/command than SOF personnel. Overall grades given by SOF personnel were very poor, while those given by unit leaders were not quite as negative. Both groups gave more favorable (although still largely negative) ratings related to how well their command provides language learning materials and how well they emphasize taking the DLPT on time. Unit leaders indicated that their unit/command needs improvement in allocating more duty hours to training or practice and ensuring that personnel in language training are not pulled for non-critical details. SOF personnel indicated that their command needs improvement in providing awards and recognition related to language, encouraging the use of language during non-language training, and finding ways to increase time for language training.

10. Language and Attrition

The results from this section indicate that language requirements and language compensation have little to do with SOF personnel's intentions to leave SOF. The findings from unit leaders and SOF personnel also suggest that in general, unit leaders are accurate in their assessment of SOF personnel in their command with regard to their intent to leave SOF, with the exception RC unit leaders. Unit leader's evaluation of RC personnel was that they had lower intent to leave, while by their own report, RC personnel had higher intent to leave than their AC counterparts. In sum, language appears to have a very minor impact on intentions to leave SOF.

In summary, unit leaders and SOF personnel agree that language training is essential for optimal mission performance but that the current state of language training is not meeting the needs of all personnel and missions. Knowing how language is used on deployment, and knowing that it is not used in the same way depending on the SOF personnel type and the mission type should guide decision makers to make changes that will aid personnel in achieving higher performance on the job. The *Final Project Report* integrates the survey findings with the focus group data and provides some interpretation and recommendations.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

To aid the reader who might not be familiar with all the acronyms and abbreviations used in this report, we have included the following table.

AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
AFSOF	Air Force Special Operations Forces
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
ARSOF CA AC	Army Special Operations Forces Civil Affairs Active Component
ARSOF CA RC	Army Special Operations Forces Civil Affairs Reserve Component
ARSOF PSYOP AC	Army Special Operations Forces Psychological Operations Active Component
ARSOF PSYOP RC	Army Special Operations Forces Psychological Operations Reserve Component
ARSOF SF AC	Army Special Operations Forces Special Forces Active Component
ARSOF SF RC	Army Special Operations Forces Special Forces Reserve Component
CA	Civil Affairs
CAO mission	Civil Affairs Operations mission
CAT I Interpreter	Category I Interpreter: Local hire, not vetted; or U.S. Citizen, not vetted
CAT II/III Interpreter	Category II/III Interpreter: US citizen with a secret/top secret clearance
CAT I/II Language	Less difficult languages to acquire for native English speakers. Examples: French, Spanish, Italian, German (includes romance languages, etc.)
CAT III/IV Language	More difficult languages to acquire for native English speakers. Examples: Cantonese, Japanese, Arabic, Dari, Pashto, Turkish, Vietnamese (includes many tonal languages, Arabic dialects, East-Asian countries, etc.)
CBT	Computer-Based Training
CLP	Command Language Program
CLPM	Command Language Program Manager
CONUS	Continental United States; in this case, refers to iso-immersion or immersion which takes place in the continental US.
CP mission	Counter Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction mission
CT mission	Counterterrorism mission
DA mission	Direct Action mission
DL	Distance/distributive Learning
DLI	Defense Language Institute
DLPT	Defense Language Proficiency Test
DoD	Department of Defense
FAO	Foreign Area Officer
FID mission	Foreign Internal Defense mission
FLPP	Foreign Language Proficiency Pay
GS	"General Schedule" position; This refers to a Civilian Government Employee
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HUMINT mission	Human Intelligence mission
IAT	Initial Acquisition Training

IO mission	Information Operations mission
MI	Military Intelligence
MLT	Machine Language Translation
NAVSCIATTS	Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School
NAVSPECWARCOM	Naval Special Warfare Command
NAVSPECWARCOM SWCC	Naval Special Warfare Command Surface Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen
Navy SEAL	Naval Special Warfare Sea, Air, Land combat forces
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
O	Officer
OCONUS	Out of the Continental United States; in this case, refers to immersion which takes place outside the continental US.
OER	Officer Evaluation Reports
OPI	(Defense Language Institute) Oral Proficiency Interview
OPTEMPO	Operations Tempo
POI	Program of Instruction
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
PSYOP mission	Psychological Operations mission
SET	Sustainment/Enhancement Training
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOFLO	Special Operations Forces Language Office
SOFTS	Special Operations Forces Tele-Training System
SR mission	Special Reconnaissance mission
STX	Situational Training Exercises
SWOA/SEA	Senior Warrant Officer Advisor/Senior Enlisted Advisor
TDT	Technology-Delivered Training
UC	Unit Commander
USAF	United States Air Force
USAJFKSWCS	United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW mission	Unconventional Warfare mission
VRT	Voice Response Translator
WO	Warrant Officer

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel operate around the globe. Most SOF units are required to have multiple language capabilities and many SOF personnel have at least one required language to learn and maintain. Approximately 50% of the language billets in the Department of Defense (DoD) are in the SOF community. Given the increased operational demands of the *Global War on Terror* (GWOT), including the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the importance of having language-enabled SOF personnel with sufficient language skills to accomplish missions inside and outside their areas of responsibility (AOR) has never been more critical. SOF leaders must ensure that Soldiers, Airmen, and Sailors in the SOF community receive effective language training and resources to enable successful accomplishment of SOF tasks that require language skills. How do SOF leaders ensure that language resources are structured and utilized effectively to achieve this objective?

A comprehensive language strategy is needed to guide the allocation of resources to provide initial acquisition, sustainment, and enhancement training as well as tools and other resources across all SOF components. A recent U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report (2003) indicated that the current SOF language strategy was insufficient and that SOF needed a strategic plan for language capability. The first step in developing a strategy is assessing the current state. Data about the current state of language usage, proficiency, and training are required as well as projections of future mission requirements and training needs. This allows for *gap analysis* to inform strategic planning and resource allocation. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of current, comprehensive data on language usage and training effectiveness from the perspective of SOF SOF personnel and unit leaders.

The Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) sponsored the *Special Operations Forces Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* to address this deficiency. This study collected current-state information about language usage, proficiency, training, and policy issues (e.g., Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, FLPP) from SOF personnel, SOF unit leaders, and other personnel involved in SOF language. The project used multiple data collection methods and was designed to provide SOFLO with valid data to develop a comprehensive language transformation strategy and to support language-related advocacy for the SOF perspective within the DoD community.

The purpose of this report is to present findings from SOF personnel who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*[3] and unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey*.

Statement of Approach

Having a strategy and linking operations to that strategy is critical for the success of any organization. A strategy can encompass different scopes—organization, unit, mission, task, process, or product/service. In the most basic terms, a strategy should specify the what (objectives, content), who (personnel, groups), where (locations), how (resources and activities), and when (time goal) at the level specified. The strategy should look both externally and internally for impetus, constraints, and opportunities. The strategy should guide all action with in its scope, including the allocation of resources. Research has shown that lack of strategic alignment is one of the reasons why many training programs fail to achieve the desired results

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[3] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

(Tannenbaum, 2002). Given the importance of language skills to GWOT and other missions, it is critical that a strategy be developed to optimize the outcomes of language training and, therefore, the levels of language proficiency available in the field for missions.

In the case of SOF Language, external and internal forces were indicating the need for the re-development of the strategy. The gap between the current levels of language proficiency and the language capabilities needed for current and future mission success should drive the development of a new language strategy for SOF. The strategy must reflect the diverse nature of SOF components and their missions as well as constraints, such as, the career-lifecycle of each type of SOF and OPTEMPO. The strategy must specify how to development and maintain the required proficiency across SOF components and missions. Once a comprehensive strategy is developed, it should be used to guide the allocation of resources to training, maintaining, and supporting the language capabilities throughout the SOF community. Finally, the implementation of the SOF language strategy should be evaluated periodically against its goals.

The first step in developing the SOF language strategy is to collect information about the current state of SOF language usage, proficiency, and training. Therefore, the needs assessment study detailed in this report was required to gather first-hand input from SOF personnel to inform the development of a SOF language strategy.

Needs assessment techniques can be used for the identification and specification of problems or performance gaps in any number of situations (Swanson, 1994; Zemke, 1994). Organizations can utilize the results of the analysis to select the most viable solution or solutions to the problem, which may or may not include training. At the strategic level, needs assessment can be used to support the development of a strategy to address problems and opportunities. Multiple techniques can be used to accomplish needs assessment in most organizations—surveys, focus groups, interviews, records/policy reviews, and observations. Each technique has strengths and weaknesses. The best needs assessment strategy is to utilize multiple methods to gather data in order to gain a more complete picture of the situation (McClelland, 1994; Swanson, 1994). The realities of the project and organization as well as the data requirements should guide the selection of techniques. Research has shown that a needs assessment is often skipped by organizations because organizational representatives believe they "know" the problem and all its issues already. The failure to perform a thorough needs assessment/analysis has lead to many programs and initiatives not achieving their stated objectives. Additionally, a needs assessment can increase the acceptance and credibility of the program or strategy.

In the case of the *SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project*, three needs assessment techniques were used: (1) review of organizational records, policy, and requirements; (2) focus groups with SOF personnel; and (3) surveys of SOF personnel, command language program managers (CLPMs), and unit leaders. These techniques were selected because they build upon each other to provide a more complete view of the situation and they allow for the opportunity to cross-validate findings. The review of organizational records, policies and requirements as well as missions and constraints related to language was used to develop the focus group study's protocol and content. Although important in their own light, the findings from the focus groups informed the development of the comprehensive, issue-oriented language surveys. This allowed for the cross-validation (i.e., the ability to confirm or disconfirm) of findings from the focus groups with a larger sample of SOF personnel.

Report Overview

This report presents the results from SOF personnel who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*[4] and unit leaders [i.e., unit commanders, senior warrant officer advisors/senior enlisted advisors (SWOA/SEAs), staff officers, and command language program managers (CLPMs)] who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey*. See the METHOD section for a more detailed description of respondent characteristics.

The report is divided into several major sections: (1) INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW (this section); (2) METHOD; (3) INTERPRETING THE RESULTS; (4) SURVEY FINDINGS; and (5) CONCLUSION. These sections are fairly straightforward in terms of content. Consult the TABLE OF CONTENTS for page numbers of the sections, subsections, and section tables and figures. The goal of this report was to present the results from SOF personnel and unit leaders. The *Final Project Report* contains the integrative results for the entire study as well as interpretation and recommendations. The INTERPRETING THE RESULTS section provides the reader with an overview of the format used to present the results and the interpretation of the numbers presented in the section tables, figures, and appendices. We recommend that reader review this section prior to reading the findings and, especially, before reviewing the tables. In addition, readers who may be unfamiliar with all the acronyms and abbreviations used in this report can refer to ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT for reference. This section can be found after the TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Please address any questions or comments about this report and project to Dr. Eric A. Surface (see Appendix C for contact information).

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[4] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

METHOD

The *Special Operations Forces Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project*
was designed to collect valid data from SOF personnel, unit leaders, and other stakeholders in
order to inform the development of a comprehensive language strategy for the SOF community.
The study included two primary data collection methods to achieve this objective: focus groups
and surveys. The focus groups conducted with SOF personnel were used as a basis for the
development of the surveys. This report presents findings from SOF personnel who responded to
the *SOF Operator Survey* [5] and unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey*. This
section provides information on the Web-based survey administered to SOF personnel including
protocol and participants.

Survey Project

Procedures

The survey study was designed to collect data from SOF personnel, unit leaders [Commanders,
Senior Enlisted Advisors/Senior Warrant Officer Advisors (SWOA/SEAs), Staff Officers, and
Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs)], and instructors to be integrated with the
results from the focus group study. The idea was for the survey to confirm or disconfirm and
expand upon the focus group findings with a larger number of participants.

Three comprehensive, issue-oriented surveys were developed and deployed on the Internet in late
July 2004. By issue-oriented, it is meant that the survey focused in depth on a defined content
area (i.e., language) which necessitated the inclusion of a large number of items. Longer surveys
tend to have higher "dropout" rates; therefore, we expected some reduction in sample size.
Additionally, in the case of an issue-oriented survey, responses from subject matter experts who
know the content area well are desired, which narrows the population of potential respondents. In
the current surveys, we were interested in the responses of SOF personnel who had been deployed
in the past four years, had some language proficiency, and had received military-provided
language training.

One survey was developed specifically for SOF personnel. Although the majority of the survey
content was the same for each respondent, the survey used several branching items to tailor the
items received to the background of each participant. The purpose of these questions was to
enable individuals to take a more focused, specific survey based on their individual experiences.
For example, we were able to capture the experiences of personnel deployed outside their area of
responsibility (AOR), while allowing others who had not been deployed outside of their AOR to
omit that section of the survey. This branching technique provided us with more accurate
information about SOF personnel and helped to reduce the length of the survey for some
participants. A second, parallel survey was developed and administered to unit leadership using a
similar branching technique. A third survey was also developed with the intention of capturing
perceptions from instructors. Unfortunately, too few instructors participated ($n = 7$) to obtain
interpretable results, necessitating the removal of that survey. Lack of Internet access and project
time constraints (i.e., short response window) impacted the response on all three surveys. In
addition, there was not a consistent way to notify individuals across the SOF community about
the survey, other than by providing a link to the survey via Army Knowledge Online (AKO). It

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[5] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

was especially difficult to contact members of the Navy, which is reflected in the very low response rate from Navy personnel ($n = 1$).

Data were collected during July and August of 2004 via a web-based survey. The official launch of the survey was on Wednesday, July 21, 2004. An email notification was sent to SOF personnel once the survey was available online. They received this notification through official email channels. SOF personnel were instructed to follow a link to the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) website. After logging in to their AKO accounts, the link for the survey could be found on the front page of AKO website. The explanation of the link stated:

"*The Special Operations Foreign Language Office (SOFLO) has created an online survey to capture your experiences on how the Army tracks language requirements. Take the survey.*"

The survey took approximately 45 minutes to complete and was available to respondents for approximately two weeks. Several e-mail notifications and reminders were sent to SOF personnel during the time that the survey was available online. The official end date for the survey was August 9, 2004 at 12 midnight.

Participants

Although the surveys were deployed for a limited time, we received a fair response rate for an issue-oriented survey (i.e., a longer survey that focuses on incumbents who are subject matter experts). The *SOF Operator Survey*[6] had 1,039 respondents and the *Unit Leadership Survey* had 158 respondents. Unfortunately, too few instructors participated ($n = 7$) to obtain interpretable results.

SOF Operator Survey[6]. After removing any questionable respondent cases, there were a total of 899 respondents to the *SOF Operator Survey*. Forty-one of these respondents indicated that the Air Force was their branch of service, 857 indicated the Army as their branch of service, and only one individual indicated the Navy as his branch of service. Once again, the fact that there was only one Navy respondent is most likely due to the fact that it was difficult to notify members of the Navy that the survey was available.

Of the 41 respondents from the Air Force, the majority of respondents (29) were Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) personnel. The remaining respondents were classified as AFSOF other (this group included the following classifications: Military Intelligence (MI) Airmen assigned to a SOF unit, non-SOF linguists, SOF other, and non-SOF other).

Of the 857 respondents from the Army, 297 were SOF personnel, 56 were military intelligence organic to SOF units, 35 were SOF support or SOF other, and 325 were non-SOF language professionals. The remaining respondents (144) were categorized as other non-SOF respondents. Of the 297 Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) personnel, 118 indicated that they were Reserve Component (RC) personnel. The ARSOF personnel who responded were categorized as being SF, CA, or PSYOP personnel in active or reserve components. Of the 297 ARSOF personnel who responded, 120 were SF AC personnel, 48 were SF RC personnel, 14 were CA AC personnel, 46 were CA RC personnel, 45 were PSYOP AC personnel, and 24 were PSYOP RC personnel.

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[6] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

When asked to indicate the number of years of SOF service, the majority of SOF personnel indicated between 1-4 years (28.2%), between 5-8 years (24.8%) and between 12-16 years (16.3%). When asked to indicate the length of time that they had been working in their current job, 18.3% of SOF personnel indicated less than one year, 51.7% indicated 1-4 years, and 15.3% indicated 5-8 years. The remaining respondents (14.6%) indicated working in their current job more than nine years.

A large percentage of respondents (78.6%) indicated that they had been deployed with a SOF unit in the past four years. When asked how long they had been deployed in the last 12 months, 31.8% indicated that they had not been deployed in the last 12 months, 11.3% indicated that they had been deployed for 1-2 months, 12.8% indicated that they had been deployed for 3-4 months, 12.8% indicated that they had been deployed for 5-6 months, and 31.2% of respondents indicated that they had been deployed for more than six months.

SOF personnel were asked to indicate the number of times that they had been deployed on exercises or operations both inside and outside of their AOR during their career. In terms of deployments inside of their AOR, 19.4% of respondents indicated that they had not been deployed, 23.5% indicated that they had been deployed 1-2 times, 10.2% indicated that they had been deployed 3-4 times, 6.5% indicated that they had been deployed 5-6 times, and 40.4% indicated that they had been deployed more than six times. In terms of deployments outside of their AOR, 24.0% of respondents indicated that they had not been deployed, 38.2% indicated that they had been deployed 1-2 times, 15.4% indicated that they had been deployed 3-4 times, 6.2% indicated that they had been deployed 5-6 times, and 16.3% indicated that they had been deployed more than six times.

Of the SOF personnel who responded to the survey, 29.2% indicated that their official or required language was Spanish, 15.5% indicated that their official or required language was Modern Standard Arabic, and 13.4% indicated that their official or required language was French. The remaining SOF respondents indicated a variety of other languages.

When asked to indicate their rank, the majority of SOF personnel (74.6%) indicated a rank ranging from E2 to E9, 4.66% indicated that their rank was WO-01 to WO-04, and 20.7% indicated that their rank was O-1 to O-6.

Unit Leadership Survey. One hundred and fifty-two unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey* indicated Army as their mother service. Four of these respondents indicated they were Army Civilians specifically. Three respondents indicated that they were in the United States Air Force (1.9%). Two respondents classified themselves as DoD Civilians (1.3%) and only one respondent indicated "Other" as their classification (0.6%). Nearly half (45.5%) of the unit leadership survey respondents indicated they were members of the Reserves/National Guard.

When asked the type of SOF personnel in their command/unit, 44 respondents indicated Army Special Forces Active Component (SF AC), 23 respondents indicated Army Special Forces Reserve Component (SF RC), 13 respondents indicated Army Civil Affairs Active Component (CA AC), 30 respondents indicated Army Civil Affairs Reserve Component (CA RC), 20 indicated Army Psychological Operations Active Component (PSYOP AC), 13 indicated Army Psychological Operations Reserve Component (PSYOP RC), 1 respondent indicated Navy SEAL, and 3 respondents indicated Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF).

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of command where they were assigned. It is important to note that this is not the rank of the respondent, but the rank of the person who commands their unit. The majority of respondents (85.5%) indicated that their level of command was O3, O4, O5, or O6. The remaining respondents (15.5%) indicated that their level of command was O7, O8, O9, or O10.

When indicating their total service in SOF, 5.2% of respondents indicated less than one year, 18.1% of respondents indicated '1-4 years,' 21.9% of respondents indicated '5-8 years,' 18.1% of respondents indicated '9-12 years,' 11 % of respondents indicated '12-16 years,' 12.3% of respondents indicated '17-20 years,' and 13.5% of respondents indicated more than 20 years. When asked how long they have been working in their current job, 33.1% of respondents indicated less than one year, 54.8% of respondents indicated 1-4 years, and only 12.1% of respondents indicated more than 5 years.

A large percentage (78.5%) of unit leaders indicated that their unit/command has been deployed inside the unit's normal AOR in the last 12 months. In addition 61.8% of unit leaders indicated that their unit/command has been deployed outside the unit's normal AOR in the last 12 months. In addition, a large percentage of unit leaders (89.0%) reported that they were proficient in a language other than English.

When asked to report how often, in any given week, an important issue regarding language training crosses their desk, 31.8% of unit leaders indicated 'never.' However, 37.0% of respondents indicated 'one time,' 16.2% respondents indicated 'two times,' and 14.9% indicated more than 'three times.'

INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

This report is designed to present the results from SOF personnel who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*[7] and unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey* which were two data collection components of the *Special Operations Forces Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* (see METHOD for more details).

The design of this technical report allows the reader to locate information quickly and without confusion. This report can be easily navigated by using the TABLE OF CONTENTS. The reader can use the TABLE OF CONTENTS to select an area of interest (e.g., Official Language Testing) and quickly navigate to the section of the survey that contains the information of interest. For more detailed information about a topic of interest, the TABLE OF CONTENTS also contains a listing of the appendices, which include item-by-item findings from the survey.

The SURVEY FINDINGS section of the report is divided into subsections which reflect the major content areas of the survey: (1) General Language Requirements, (2) Mission-Based Language Requirements, (3) Interpreters, (4) Official Language Testing, (5) Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP), (6) Language Training, (7) Attitudes toward Language Training and Proficiency, (8) Use of Technology, (9) Organizational Climate and Support, and (10) Language and Attrition. The content of these sections is briefly described below:

SECTION 1: General Language Requirements
This section contains information regarding the typical need for foreign language skills while executing SOF-specific tasks on deployment. SOF personnel and CLPMs were asked their opinion on the frequency and importance of several SOF-specific language tasks such as the use of street dialect (e.g. blue-collar/slang) in conversation with people in the deployment location and the use of formal language in conversation with people in the deployment location. These language tasks were identified from the focus groups study.

SECTION 2: Mission-Based Language Requirements
This section contains information about the use of language on the respondents' most recent training or operational deployment (both inside and outside their normal AOR). This includes questions about the level of language proficiency ideal for the tasks and duties, the length of deployment on this mission, and whether or not the respondent or respondent's personnel experienced language-related issues or deficiencies while on the deployment.

SECTION 3: Interpreters
This section presents information about SOF personnel's and unit leaders' experiences with interpreters while deployed. Basic characteristics of interpreter use, such as which type of interpreter was used, as well as an assessment of the interpreter's competence and trustworthiness, are covered in this section. This section presents information regarding operational deployments both inside and outside of the respondents' AOR.

SECTION 4: Official Language Testing
This section presents SOF personnel's and unit leaders' perceptions of the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). SOF personnel were asked specific questions regarding their most recent experience with the DLPT, including a self-report of their most recent DLPT score. SOF personnel were also asked about their attitudes toward the DLPT and the Defense

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[7] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

Language Institute Oral Proficiency Interview (DLI OPI). Unit leaders were asked about the relatedness of the DLPT to mission performance and the level of importance they place on DLPT scores in their unit/command.

SECTION 5: Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP)
This section contains SOF personnel's and unit leaders' perceptions and experiences with FLPP. SOF personnel were asked specific questions regarding FLPP's value as a motivator in addition to questions about procedures used to assign FLPP. Unit leaders were asked to evaluate FLPP in terms of its incentive value for personnel.

SECTION 6: Language Training
This section contains information regarding SOF personnel's and unit leaders' perceptions of several different types of language training: initial acquisition training, sustainment/enhancement training, and immersion training. SOF personnel also assessed their instructor and curriculum for initial acquisition training and sustainment/enhancement training based on their most recent training experience. SOF personnel were also asked to provide general attitudes towards language training and perceptions of the effectiveness of language training on deployment.

SECTION 7: ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY
This section presents information regarding SOF personnel's ability to use language skills on deployment. SOF personnel were asked about their confidence in terms of their foreign language proficiency and were also asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their training in preparing them to use foreign language skills. Unit leaders were asked to rate how well their personnel were prepared to perform a variety of language-related tasks on deployment.

SECTION 8: Use of Technology
This section presents information regarding SOF personnel's and unit leaders' opinions and experiences with technology. SOF personnel and unit leaders were asked specifically about their attitudes toward technology-delivered training (TDT) and machine language translation (MLT). Respondents were asked to evaluate what role TDT should play in the training process and were also asked to evaluate the usefulness of MLT as a job aid.

SECTION 9: Organizational Climate and Support
SOF personnel and unit leaders were instructed to assign a letter grade (i.e., A, B, C, D, or F) related to how well their chains of command provide support for language training. An example item from this section of the survey is 'Provides recognition and awards related to language training.'

SECTION 10: Language and Attrition
This section presents unit leaders' beliefs regarding the intentions of personnel in their command/unit to leave SOF and SOF personnel's intentions to leave SOF as a result of language-related issues. Questions in this section of the survey assessed whether SOF personnel would leave SOF due to changes in language requirements, his/her inability to receive sufficient language training, or for a civilian position where language skills are highly compensated.

Each of these ten sections contains the following subdivisions: (1) Introduction; (2) Respondents; and (3) Findings. The 'Introduction' provides a brief overview of the content of the section and refers the reader to additional places where more complete lists of items and results can be found.

The 'Respondents' section provides information about the source and the number respondents to that particular section. Additionally, functional background information about respondents is presented where applicable. The 'Findings' section provides a more detailed description of the survey results, including a presentation of results by respondent classification (i.e., unit leaders and SOF personnel).

Interpreting Survey Scales

The majority of survey questions were answered using five point Likert-type scales. Examples of the most commonly used scales and their numerical values used in the analyses are presented in the table below:

Scale	Numerical Values				
	1	2	3	4	5
Agreement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Frequency	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often/Always
Importance	Not Important	Low Importance	Important	High Importance	Critical

Unless the findings are specifically referred to as percentages or frequencies, the findings presented in this report are means based on a 100-point scale. **In general, higher averages are better, unless otherwise noted. There are a number of items that were negatively worded. These items, which are marked, should be interpreted as lower numbers being better.**

In an attempt to aid interpretation, the following table presents the interpretation of the 100-point agreement scale used for most items on the surveys. Remember the interpretation of agreement or lack of agreement as positive or negative depends on the wording of the question. Therefore, be careful to read the question thoroughly before interpreting the data.

Interpreting Responses on the 100-point scale	
100	If every participant responded "strongly agree" for the item, then the survey item mean would be 100.
75	If every participant responded "agree" for the item, then the survey item mean would be 75. Also, this number could result from a mixture of responses where the majority of the responses were "strongly agree" and "agree."
50	If every participant responded "neutral" for the item, then the item mean would be 50. Also, this number could be the result of the "strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses being equally balanced with the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses.
25	If every participant responded "disagree" for the item, then this the survey item mean would be 25. Also, this number could result from a mixture of responses where the majority of the responses were "strongly disagree" and "disagree."
0	If every participant responded "strongly disagree" for the item, then the survey item mean would be 0.

The purpose of this report is to present findings from SOF personnel who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*[8] and unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey*. There are six other technical reports that provide detailed information about and results from the focus group study and the other surveys, including the *Final Project Report*. APPENDIX A presents an overview of each report and directs the reader to these documents. To locate specific information and survey responses from these groups, it is necessary to consult lower-level reports. These reports contain specific findings presented in text and tabular format. There are also multiple appendices in each report that provide survey responses analyzed separately for each specific subgroup. A brief description of these reports and a list of appendices included in each report are provided below.

Army Operator Survey Report [Technical Report #20040601]

The *Army Operator Survey Report* contains findings from ARSOF personnel as well as other respondents classified as ARSOF other, MI assigned to SOF, Non-SOF Linguists, and other Non-SOF respondents.

List of Appendices:
      Appendix A: Army Overall
      Appendix B: ARSOF Overall
      Appendix C: ARSOF Personnel
      Appendix D: Special Forces Active & Reserve
      Appendix E: Special Forces Active Component
      Appendix F: Special Forces Reserve Component
      Appendix G: Civil Affairs Active & Reserve
      Appendix H: Civil Affairs Active Component
      Appendix I: Civil Affairs Reserve Component
      Appendix J: Psychological Operations Active & Reserve
      Appendix K: Psychological Operations Active Component
      Appendix L: Psychological Operations Reserve Component
      Appendix M: ARSOF Active Component Personnel
      Appendix N: ARSOF Reserve Component Personnel
      Appendix O: SOF Other & SOF Support
      Appendix P: MI Assigned to SOF Unit
      Appendix Q: Non-SOF Army Linguists
      Appendix R: Army RC personnel

Air Force Operator Survey Report [Technical Report #20040602]

The *Air Force Operator Survey Report* contains findings from AFSOF personnel and other AFSOF respondents.

List of Appendices:
      Appendix A: Overall Air Force
      Appendix B: AFSOF Personnel

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[8] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

SOF Operator Survey Report [Technical Report #20040603]

The SOF Operator Survey Report integrates findings from AFSOF personnel, ARSOF personnel, and one Navy SEAL. This report focuses solely on responses from SOF personnel and does not include any other personnel within the Army or Air Force.

List of Appendices:
      Appendix A: SOF Personnel
      Appendix B: AFSOF Personnel
      Appendix C: ARSOF Personnel
      Appendix D: ARSOF Active Component Personnel
      Appendix E: ARSOF Reserve Component Personnel

Unit Leadership Survey Report [Technical Report #20040604]

The Unit Leadership Survey Report contains findings from Unit Commanders, Staff Warrant Officer Advisors/Senior Enlisted Advisors (SWOA/SEAs), Staff Officers, and Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs)

List of Appendices:
    Appendix A: Findings for Unit Leaders
    Appendix B: Findings for Unit Commanders
    Appendix C: Findings for Staff Warrant Officer Advisor/Senior Enlisted Advisor (SWOA/SEA)
    Appendix D: Findings for Staff Officers
    Appendix E: Findings for Command Language Program Manager (CLPM)
    Appendix F: Findings for Active Component Unit Leaders
    Appendix G: Findings for Reserve Component Unit Leaders

SURVEY RESULTS

The findings from SOF personnel who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*[9] and unit leaders who responded to the *Unit Leadership Survey* are presented in the following ten sections. The findings presented in these sections are descriptive in nature and, therefore, this report does not provide extensive interpretation of findings or recommendations. For an integration of the findings from the Survey Project with information gathered from the Focus Group Project and recommendations based on project findings, see the *Final Project Report* (details from this report are presented in Appendix A).

The first section of the report, 'General Language Requirements' presents respondents' perceptions of the typical need for foreign language skills in addition to the frequency of use and the importance of these skills while executing SOF-specific tasks on deployment. The second section, 'Mission-Based Language Requirements' contains information about the use of language on the respondents' most recent training or operational deployment. The third section, 'Interpreters' presents information regarding the respondents' experiences with interpreters while deployed both inside and outside of their area of responsibility (AOR), including an evaluation of the interpreter's competence and trustworthiness.

The fourth section of the report, 'Official Language Testing' presents respondent's perceptions of the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). The fifth section, 'Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP) presents the respondents' perceptions and experiences with FLPP, including responses to questions about FLPP's value as a motivator and the procedures used to assign FLPP. The sixth section, 'Language Training' presents information regarding respondent perceptions of several different types of language training: initial acquisition training, sustainment/enhancement training, and immersion training. The seventh section, 'Attitudes toward Language Training and Proficiency' presents perceptions of the ability of SOF personnel to use foreign language skills on deployment. The eighth section, 'Use of Technology' presents respondents' opinions and experiences with technology, including attitudes toward technology-delivered training (TDT) and machine language translation (MLT). The ninth section, 'Organizational Climate and Support' contains findings regarding perceptions of how well the respondents' chains of command provide support for language training. The tenth section, 'Language and Attrition' presents findings regarding beliefs about SOF personnel's intentions to leave SOF as a result of language-related issues.

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[9] Other SOF and non-SOF personnel responded to the *SOF Operator Survey* in addition to SOF operators.

SECTION 1: GENERAL LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

This section presents the general language requirements and typical need for specific foreign language skills in executing SOF core tasks by integrating the perceptions of SOF personnel and command language program managers (CLPMs). The tasks in this section relate to language usage while on deployment. For detailed findings and from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report, Air Force Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report,* and *Unit Leadership Survey Report*. For further explanation of language functions and proficiency levels as described in the surveys, please see Tables 1.1 and 1.2.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. CLPMs were the only subgroup of unit leaders who received this particular section of the survey. There were 26 CLPMs who responded to this section.

SOF Personnel. A total of 257 SOF personnel indicated that they had been deployed with a SOF unit in the past four years and therefore were eligible to respond to this section. There were 25 AFSOF personnel respondents. Two-hundred thirty-one respondents were ARSOF personnel. One-hundred forty-nine of these were classified as ARSOF AC personnel, while 82 were ARSOF RC personnel. There was one Navy SEAL respondent.

Findings

Overall Findings

Responses given by CLPMs and SOF personnel for items in this section were very consistent. Both groups indicated 'Building rapport' as the most commonly used and most important language function while on deployment (See Table 1.1 for a description of language functions). Also, these groups designated 'Basic writing tasks' as the least frequently used and least important function of language while on deployment. Although there were some similarities between these two groups, there were also some important differences. Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 show the ratings of importance and frequency on several different language functions for CLPMs, AFSOF personnel, and ARSOF personnel. Although CLPMs and ARSOF personnel agreed that the most important and frequently used function of language was 'Building rapport,' AFSOF personnel designated 'Military-technical vocabulary' as the most important and most frequently used. There were some other important differences between these groups. For example, CLPMs rated 'Giving commands' as more important and occurring more frequently than both ARSOF personnel and AFSOF personnel. AFSOF personnel indicated that this function was less frequent and was lower in importance than many of the other language functions. Also CLPMs rated 'Basic listening' tasks as less important and frequent than both AFSOF and ARSOF personnel, who rated this task as highly important and frequent. The majority of CLPMs and SOF personnel indicated that an 'Advanced Communication' level of proficiency, which represents a high level of proficiency, would be ideal for typical tasks and duties.

Unit Leadership Findings

CLPMs were asked to rate the frequency and importance of various functions of language proficiency on their typical missions. CLPMs indicated that the most frequently used and

important function of language was 'Building rapport.' Using 'Slang/street language' was rated as the second most frequent, while 'Giving commands' received the second-highest rating of importance. 'Basic writings tasks' were reported as being used the least frequently and as being the least important. The majority of CLPMs indicated that 'Advanced Communication' would be the ideal proficiency level for tasks and duties. It is important to note that this level of proficiency is not the highest level that could have been chosen. CLPMs from active component units rated the frequency and importance of 'Giving commands' and using 'Military-specific language' more highly than did CLPMs from reserve component units.

CLPMs rated 'Building rapport' as occurring most frequently ($M = 78.9$) and being most important ($M = 74.0$). The item rated as having the second-highest frequency of occurrence on deployment was the use of 'Slang/street language' ($M = 73.0$). The item that received the second highest importance rating was 'Giving commands' ($M = 71.0$). 'Basic reading tasks' were identified as being used slightly more frequently ($M = 66.0$) and as being slightly more important ($M = 64.0$) than 'Basic listening tasks' ($M = 53.9$, $M = 56.7$). 'Basic writing tasks' were reported as being used the least frequently ($M = 38.5$) and as being the least important ($M = 37.5$) of all of the language functions (See Figure 1.1 for a graphical representation of these findings).

The majority of CLPMs indicated 'Advanced Communication' as the level of language proficiency ideal for typical tasks and duties (37.0%; see Table 1.2 for a description of these levels of language proficiency). 'Intermediate Communication' was reported slightly less frequently (29.6%). 'Basic Communication' was selected least frequently as the ideal level of proficiency (3.7%), while no level of communication was selected somewhat more frequently (11.1%). The highest level of proficiency that could be chosen, 'Complex Communication' was only selected by 18.5% of respondents.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- CLPMs indicated that the most frequently used and important function of language was 'Building rapport.' Using 'Slang/street language' was rated as the second most frequent, while 'Giving commands' received the second-highest rating of importance.
- 'Basic writings tasks' were reported as being used the least frequently and as being the least important.
- The majority of CLPMs indicated that 'Advanced Communication' would be the ideal proficiency level for tasks and duties. It is important to note that this level of proficiency is not the highest level that could have been chosen.
- AC CLPMs rated the frequency and importance of 'Giving commands' and using 'Military-specific language' more highly than did RC CLPMs.

SOF Personnel Findings

SOF personnel reported that 'Building rapport' was the most important language function ($M = 83.0$) and was used the most frequently ($M = 78.8$). The item receiving the second-highest ratings for frequency of occurrence on deployment was 'Basic reading tasks' ($M = 74.4$). The item receiving the second-highest ratings for importance on deployment was 'Giving commands' ($M = 74.3$). Conversely, the lowest-rated item for frequency of use and importance while on deployment was 'Basic writing tasks' ($M = 47.5$, 51.6).

92.7% of SOF personnel indicated that it would be ideal to have a level of communication that can be classified as intermediate or higher. It should be noted that respondents indicated the level based on a list of language tasks/functions, and all the functions provided on this list would rate at or above a 1+ on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale used within the DoD (see Appendix B for a Layman's Understanding of ILR Language Skill Level Descriptions). 'Intermediate communication' includes the ability to perform the following language-related tasks: asking and responding to questions beyond the standard "tourist guide" phrases; limited conversation/dialogue; listening and understanding the typical radio/TV broadcasts or conversation; getting the gist of newspaper headlines or articles; working knowledge and understanding of the culture.

The majority of SOF personnel indicated 'Advanced Communication' as the level of language proficiency ideal for typical tasks and duties (44.4%). An advanced communication level includes the ability to perform the following language-related tasks: negotiations; persuading others with complex issues or thoughts; writing contracts or complex messages; reading very sophisticated or technical materials; complete comprehension of conversations and broadcasts; confidence in all levels of conversation; and ability to use culturally appropriate humor and metaphors.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel indicated that the most frequent and important use of language skills on deployment was 'Building rapport.' AFSOF personnel indicated that 'Military-technical vocabulary' was the most important and frequently used function, while ARSOF personnel indicated that 'Building rapport' was the most important and frequently used function.
- Within ARSOF, PSYOP AC personnel differed from the other subgroups in that they rated 'Basic reading tasks' as the most frequently used and 'Basic listening tasks' as the most important function of language. PSYOP RC personnel, however rated 'Building rapport' as the most important and frequent function of language, which is consistent with findings for SOF personnel overall.
- ARSOF personnel indicated 'Basic writing tasks' as the least frequently used and least important language function. AFSOF personnel indicated that 'Giving commands' was the least frequently used function of language, while using 'Slang/street language' was rated as the least important.
- More than 90% of SOF personnel indicated that it would be ideal to have a level of communication that can be classified as intermediate or higher. It should be noted that respondents indicated the level based on a list of language tasks/functions, and all the functions provided on this list would rate at or above a 1+ on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale used within the DoD. The majority of SOF personnel indicated 'Advanced Communication' as the level of language proficiency ideal for typical tasks and duties.

Table 1.1 Deployment language function examples

Language Function	Example situation on deployment
Slang/street language	Asking for directions from or giving important instructions to the typical person you encounter while deployed.
Giving commands	"Get down!" or "Drop the weapon!"
Formal language	Giving a thank you speech to local country hosts or conducting business negotiations with officials.
Building rapport	The initial meeting with the local militia leader.
Military-technical vocabulary	Training local mechanics, policemen, or soldiers.
Basic reading tasks	Identifying important documents, reading signs/graffiti, and navigation.
Basic writing tasks	Making written arrangements (contracts) with local officials, writing an operations order, or writing a list of supplies for a local guide to purchase.
Basic listening tasks	Listening to conversations at a café or a radio broadcast to determine local support for your presence.

Table 1.2 Explanation of proficiency levels

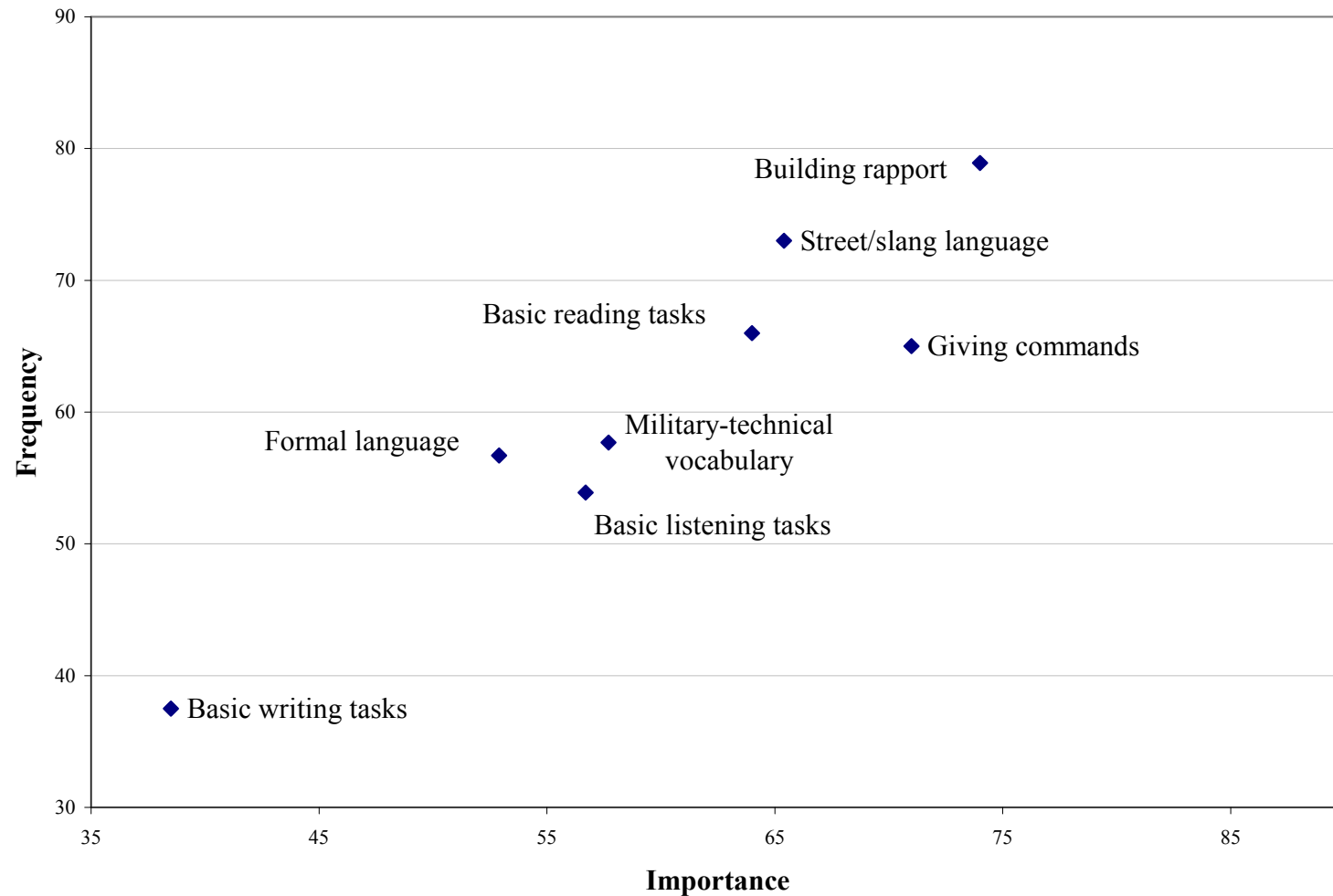| Level of Language Proficiency	Explanation
None	None
Basic	Asking directions; reading street signs or a map; giving basic commands; using simple common courtesy phrases and questions ("tourist guide" phrases); limited knowledge of the culture.
Intermediate	Asking and responding to questions beyond the standard "tourist guide" phrases; limited conversation/dialogue; listening and understanding the typical radio/TV broadcasts or conversation; getting the gist of newspaper headlines or articles; working knowledge and understanding of the culture.
Advanced	Extended dialogue/conversation on a variety of topics; reading important documents or the local newspaper with a good understanding; listening and understanding most conversations or broadcasts; and ability to understand culturally appropriate humor and metaphors.
Complex	Negotiations; persuading others with complex issues or thoughts; writing contracts or complex messages; reading very sophisticated or technical materials; complete comprehension of conversations and broadcasts; confidence in all levels of conversation; and ability to use culturally appropriate humor and metaphors.

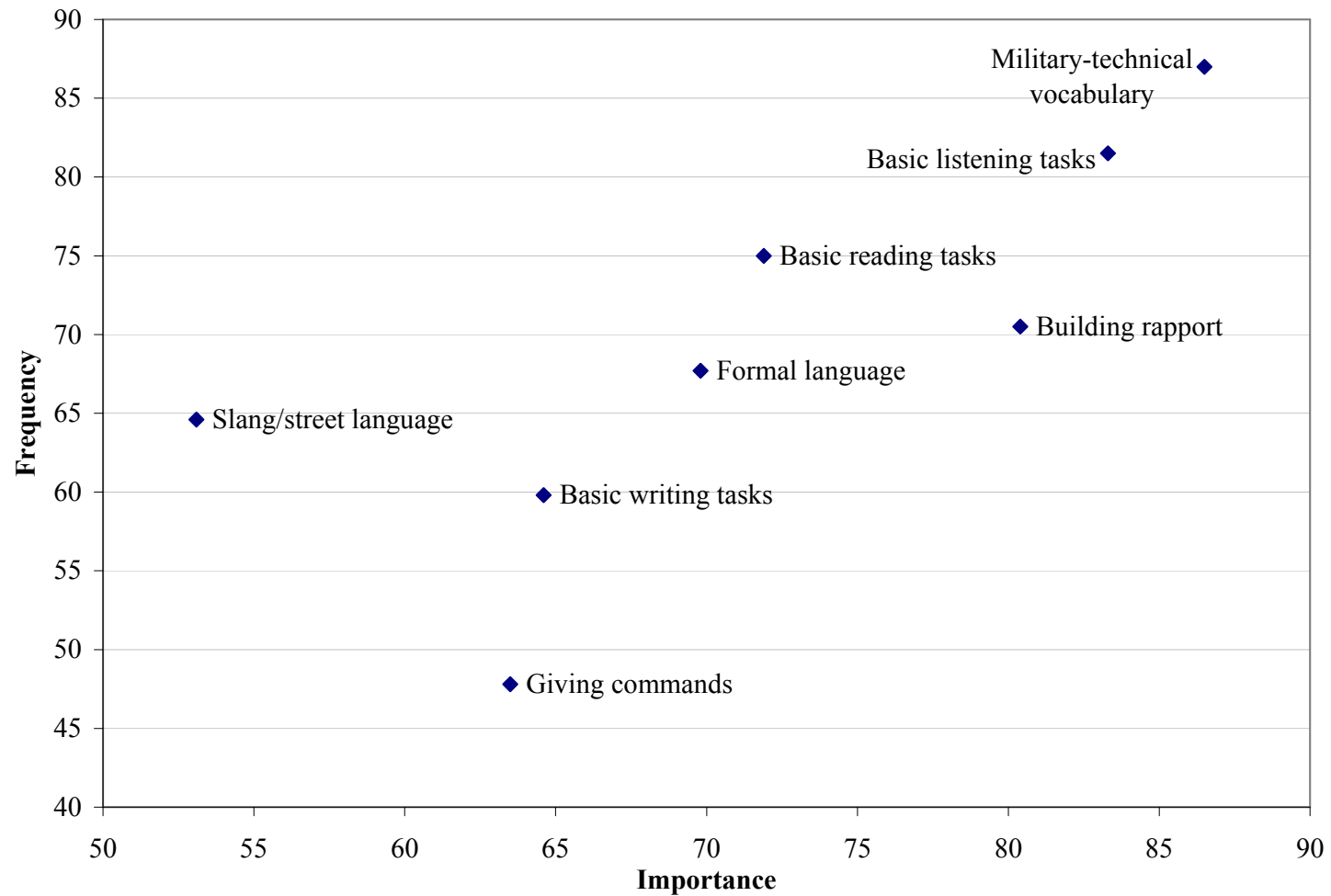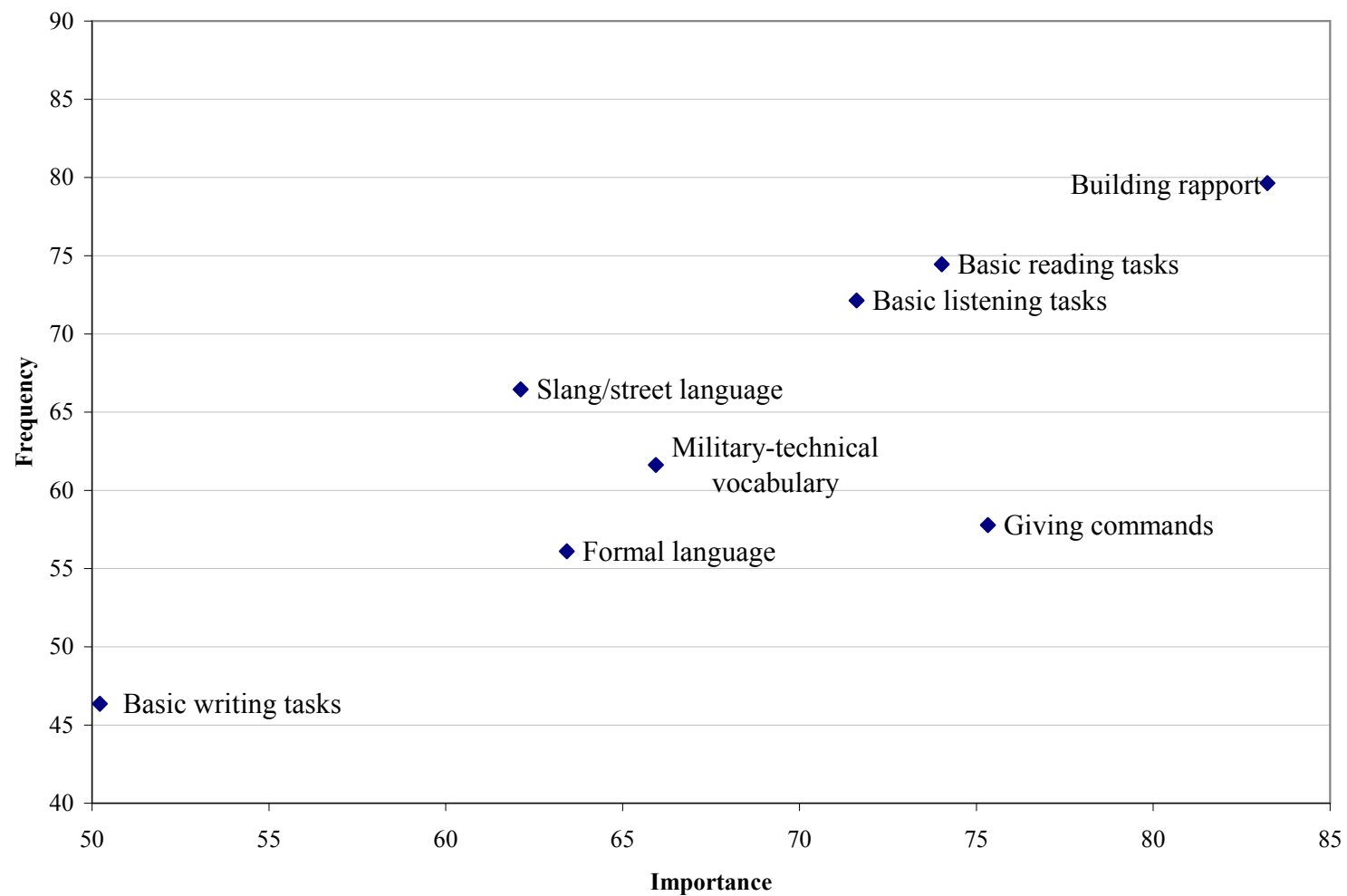*Figure 1.1 General Language Requirements – Command Language Program Managers*

Figure 1.2 General Language Requirements – AFSOF Personnel

Figure 1.3 – General Language Requirements – ARSOF Personnel

SECTION 2: MISSION-BASED LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

SOF personnel and unit leaders provided information about mission-based language requirements for their most recent missions both inside and outside of AOR missions. This included information about the types of SOF tasks used on missions, the level of proficiency ideal for mission, and the importance of various aspects of language proficiency while on deployment. For detailed findings and a complete list of questions from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report, Air Force Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report,* and *Unit Leadership Survey Report.*

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. There were total of 158 unit leaders who received the section regarding inside AOR deployments. They were categorized as follows: 57 Unit Commanders, 16 SWOA/SEAs, 58 Staff Officers, and 27 CLPMs. There were 104 unit leaders who received content regarding deployment outside their AOR. They were categorized as follows: 31 Unit Commanders, 9 SWOA/SEAs, 37 Staff Officers, and 27 CLPMs.

SOF Personnel. A total of 257 SOF personnel indicated that they had been deployed with a SOF unit within the past four years and therefore, answered the section about the most recent training or operational deployment. Two-hundred thirty one were classified as ARSOF personnel and 25 were classified as AFSOF personnel. There was one Navy respondent. A total of 142 respondents further indicated that they had been deployed outside of their AOR in the past four years, and therefore answered the section about the most recent deployment outside of their unit's normal AOR. One hundred and twenty seven were classified as ARSOF personnel and 15 were classified as AFSOF personnel.

Findings

Overall Findings

Both unit leaders and SOF personnel indicated CAO and PSYOP missions as two of the most common tasks/missions on deployment inside of their AOR. AFSOF personnel primarily engaged in FID and CT tasks, while ARSOF personnel were assigned to PSYOP, CAO, FID, and UW tasks. Both SOF personnel and unit leaders indicated 'Building rapport' as the most important function of language proficiency, although all language functions were rated as important by unit leaders and SOF personnel. Both groups also indicated that a high level of proficiency would be necessary on missions. SOF personnel were asked to rate how frequently they used language and their preparedness for their most recent deployment. Although all SOF personnel indicated that they used language frequently, AFSOF personnel slightly agreed that they were prepared for their most recent deployment in terms of language and cultural understanding, while ARSOF personnel reported that they were not well prepared. Within ARSOF, RC personnel reported feeling less prepared than AC personnel.

Findings regarding outside AOR deployment were consistent with findings regarding inside AOR deployment for unit leaders. 'Building rapport' was rated the most important function of language for all subgroups as well as for RC personnel. Unit leaders responded negatively to items that described their personnel's proficiency and ability on deployments outside of their AOR. SOF personnel indicated that higher levels of proficiency were seen as more

necessary for missions inside of the AOR than for missions outside of the AOR. SOF personnel also reported being less able to meet language-related requirements for missions outside of their AOR than for missions inside of their AOR. ARSOF personnel reported more difficulties with language outside of their AOR than AFSOF personnel.

Unit Leadership Findings

Inside AOR Deployments. Overall, unit leaders who participated in the survey indicated that their most common SOF core tasks inside of their AOR were civil affairs operations (CAO) and psychological operations (PSYOP), although SWOA/SEAs indicated unconventional warfare (UW) as the most common SOF core task. Over 90% of unit leader respondents indicated the need for SOF personnel to possess a level of communication that can be classified as intermediate or higher. However, CLPMs indicated that somewhat lower levels of proficiency than that identified by the other unit leaders would be ideal for typical tasks and duties.

With regard to specific functions of language, 'Building rapport' was rated as the most important function, although other dimensions were also seen as important to mission success. CLPMs rated certain functions of language proficiency as less important when compared to the other unit leaders.

Twenty eight percent of unit leaders indicated that their unit's primary SOF core task while deployed inside their normal area of operations (AOR) was civil affairs operations (CAO), 22.3% of respondents indicated psychological operations (PSYOP), and 19.7% indicated unconventional warfare (UW) as their primary SOF core task within their command's normal AOR. Unit leaders were also asked about the type of deployments unit leaders conducted during their tenure in their current position. The most commonly cited mission type was CAO followed closely by foreign internal defense (FID). In addition, there was a fairly wide range of representation in terms of tenure in the current position. While 24.8% of unit leaders reported working less than six months in their current position, 31.2% reported working more than 24 months in their current position.

Over 90% of unit leaders who responded to the survey indicated the need for a level of communication that can be classified as intermediate or higher. It should be noted that respondents indicated the level based on a list of language tasks/functions, and all the functions provided on this list would rate at or above a 1+ on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale used within the DoD (see Appendix B for a Layman's Understanding of ILR Language Skill Level Descriptions). 'Intermediate communication' includes the ability to perform the following language-related tasks: asking and responding to questions beyond the standard "tourist guide" phrases; limited conversation/dialogue; listening and understanding the typical radio/TV broadcasts or conversation; getting the gist of newspaper headlines or articles; working knowledge and understanding of the culture.

In addition, 36.7% of unit leaders believed that a 'Complex Communication' level was the highest level needed for typical tasks and missions, while an equal percentage indicated that an 'Advanced Communication' level was the highest level needed for typical tasks and missions. A complex communication level includes the ability to perform the following language-related tasks: extended dialogue/conversation on a variety of topics; reading important documents or the local newspaper with a good understanding; listening and understanding most conversations or broadcasts; and ability to understand culturally appropriate humor and metaphors. An advanced communication level includes the ability to

perform the following language-related tasks: negotiations; persuading others with complex issues or thoughts; writing contracts or complex messages; reading very sophisticated or technical materials; complete comprehension of conversations and broadcasts; confidence in all levels of conversation; and ability to use culturally appropriate humor and metaphors. Only 3.8% or respondents indicated that no level of proficiency was needed. This finding shows that unit leaders believe that high levels of language proficiency are needed on deployments.

Unit leaders reported that 'Building rapport' is the most important function of language inside of the unit's normal AOR ($M = 84.8$). Other functions that were indicated as having a moderately high level of importance were 'Increasing awareness' ($M = 77.1$) and 'Maintaining control in hostile confrontations' ($M = 75.8$). 'Logistics,' or saving time, was rated by unit leaders as having the lowest level of importance, although the mean of 57.3 still indicates that this is a moderately important function of language on deployment.

Outside AOR Deployments. Findings for this section were consistent with finding regarding deployments inside of a unit's AOR. 'Building rapport' was rated as the most important function of language for all subgroups, including RC leaders. When responses were analyzed by primary mission type, some differences emerged as to the most important feature of language. In general, unit leaders disagreed that their personnel were proficient and capable in terms of language skills on deployments outside of their AOR. The most widely-held suggestion to enhance language preparation on outside of AOR missions was to simply extend the length of training programs.

Unit leaders reported that 'Building rapport' was the most important function of language outside of the unit's normal AOR with ($M = 79.4$). Other functions that were indicated as having a high level of importance were 'Increasing awareness' ($M = 72.7$) and 'Maintaining control in hostile confrontations' ($M = 72.7$). 'Logistics' was rated by unit leaders as having the lowest level of importance, although the reported mean of 51.3 still indicated that this is a moderately important function of language on deployment.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- For unit leaders who participated in the survey, the most common SOF core tasks on deployments inside of their area of responsibility (AOR) were civil affairs operations (CAO) and psychological operations (PSYOP) although SWOA/SEAs indicated unconventional warfare (UW) as the most common mission type.
- Over 90% of unit leaders who responded to the survey indicated the need for a level of communication that can be classified as 'Intermediate' or higher. It should be noted that respondents indicated the level based on a list of language tasks/functions, and all the functions provided on this list would rate above a 1+ on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale used within the DoD (see Appendix I for a Layman's Understanding of ILR Language Skill Level Descriptions).
- With regard to specific functions of language, unit leaders rated 'Building rapport' as the most important function.
- Unit leaders rated 'Building rapport' as the most important function of language for missions outside of their AOR.
- Unit leaders disagreed that their personnel were proficient and capable in terms of language skills on deployments outside of their AOR.

- Unit leaders disagreed that their personnel were equally proficient in terms of language tasks on missions inside and outside of their AOR.

SOF Personnel Findings

Most recent deployment. Overall findings for this section showed that SOF personnel commonly reported foreign internal defense (FID), psychological operations (PYSOP), unconventional warfare (UW), and civil affairs operations (CAO) as their primary SOF core task while on the most recent deployment. AFSOF and ARSOF personnel engaged in very different SOF core tasks while on their most recent deployment. For their most recent deployment inside their AOR, AFSOF personnel were primarily involved in FID and counterterrorism (CT) tasks, while ARSOF personnel were primarily assigned to PSYOP, FID, UW, and CAO tasks. For the most recent deployment outside their AOR, AFSOF personnel engaged primarily in FID core tasks, while UW core tasks were most common for ARSOF personnel. SF personnel indicated that the primary SOF tasks on deployments inside their AOR were FID, and the primary SOF tasks on deployments outside their AOR were UW. CA personnel reported being most frequently deployed on CAO missions both inside and outside of their AOR. PSYOP personnel were primarily deployed on PSYOP missions both inside and outside their AOR.

SOF personnel who responded to this section of the survey indicated that their primary SOF core task on their most recent deployment was one of four types. Nearly 23% of SOF personnel indicated FID (22.7%), 19.9% indicated PSYOP, 16.0% indicated UW, and 15.2% indicated CAO. 31.5% of SOF personnel indicated FID as their primary SOF task inside their AOR and 23.6% indicated PSYOP as their primary SOF task inside their AOR. 30.8% of SOF personnel indicated UW as their primary SOF task outside of their AOR, while 20.9% of SOF personnel indicated CAO as their primary SOF task outside of their AOR.

For missions inside and outside their AOR, SOF personnel indicated that an 'Advanced Communication' level would be ideal. However, more SOF personnel who were deployed outside their AOR, said that no level of proficiency would be ideal than those deployed inside their AOR. This finding suggests that higher levels of proficiency are needed for missions inside their AOR than for missions outside their AOR. When analyzing the ideal level of proficiency according to mission type for deployments inside their AOR, a level of proficiency in 'Basic Communication' was most appropriate for special reconnaissance (SR) missions and 'Advanced Communication' or 'Complex Communication' was most appropriate for FID, CAO, and PSYOP missions. Similar results were found for missions outside their AOR. These findings suggest that different levels of proficiency are needed for different missions, an important consideration in determining the appropriate language training for deployments.

The majority of SOF personnel (41.4%) indicated that 'Advanced Communication' would be ideal. Further examining these responses by mission type shows that 40.9% of SOF personnel indicated that either 'None' or 'Basic Communication' was ideal for direct action (DA) missions, while 57.2% of SOF personnel indicated either 'None' or 'Basic Communication' was being ideal for SR missions. However, for many of the other mission types, most SOF personnel indicated an 'Advanced' or 'Complex Communication' was ideal. For example, 72.4% of SOF personnel indicated that 'Advanced' or 'Complex Communication' would be ideal for FID missions, 66.7% of SOF personnel indicated that 'Advanced' or 'Complex Communication' would be ideal for CAO missions, and 70.6% indicated that 'Advanced' or 'Complex Communication' would be ideal for PSYOP missions.

In comparison to missions inside of their AOR in which only 3.0% of SOF personnel indicated that no level of proficiency would be ideal, 14.3% of SOF personnel indicated that no level of proficiency would be ideal for a mission outside of their AOR. Despite this difference, the majority of SOF personnel indicated that 'Advanced Communication' would be ideal for missions inside their AOR (43.6%) and for missions outside of their AOR (37.4%). When examining these responses according to mission type, the respondents who indicated DA or SR missions, indicated that higher levels of proficiency would be ideal for missions inside their AOR, while lower levels of proficiency would be ideal for missions outside their AOR. The same pattern was observed or FID, CAO and PSYOP missions.

SOF personnel were asked to rate the frequency and importance of various language skills on their most recent mission. When indicating the frequency of using various aspects of language proficiency, SOF personnel reported that the most frequently used skills were 'Listening tasks' while the least frequently used skills were 'Writing tasks.' ARSOF and AFSOF differed in the types of language skills they were required to use. AFSOF personnel indicated higher frequencies for using 'Military-language' and 'Formal language' than ARSOF personnel. ARSOF personnel indicated a higher frequency of interpreter use than AFSOF personnel.

SOF personnel reported that they used 'Slang/street language' ($M = 60.4$) more frequently than 'Formal language' ($M = 48.8$) and 'Military-specific language' ($M = 53.8$) while deployed. SOF personnel also reported using 'Speaking skills' ($M = 70.3$) and 'Listening skills' ($M = 74.4$) more frequently than 'Reading skills' ($M = 48.3$) or 'Writing skills' ($M = 33.3$). SOF personnel also frequently used interpreters ($M = 68.1$) and infrequently used ($M = 34.5$) 'Other job aids.'

SOF personnel used 'Military-specific language' most frequently ($M = 75.9$) for FID core tasks SOF personnel used 'Formal language' most frequently for PSYOP core tasks ($M = 55.6$) and FID core tasks ($M = 54.7$) and less frequently ($M = 33.3$) for DA core tasks. ARSOF personnel used 'Slang/street language' frequently for PSYOP ($M = 65.3$) and FID ($M = 62.5$) core tasks. 'Speaking' and 'Listening skills' were reported as being used more frequently than 'Reading' and 'Writing skills.' These findings were consistent across mission types. Most SOF personnel reported using interpreters very frequently. However, SOF personnel reported 'Using interpreters' less frequently for FID ($M = 41.7$) and CT core tasks ($M = 45.8$).

When rating the importance of various aspects of language proficiency, the most important task overall differed between ARSOF and AFSOF personnel. ARSOF personnel rated 'Building rapport' as the most important use of language while AFSOF personnel rated 'Military-technical language' as the most important. AFSOF personnel also consistently rated each aspect of language as more important than ARSOF personnel.

SOF personnel rated 'Building rapport' as the highest in importance ($M = 84.7$) followed by 'Increasing awareness' ($M = 80.8$) when evaluating the importance of various aspects of language proficiency on the most recent deployment. The item that was rated as relatively least important, 'Logistics (i.e., saving time),' was still rated as moderately high in importance ($M = 66.2$).

When asked two specific questions about their preparedness to use language on deployment and their frequency of using language on deployment, ARSOF personnel indicated that they

used language frequently on deployment, but were not sufficiently prepared in terms of language and cultural understanding. However, this finding differed for AFSOF personnel. AFSOF personnel agreed that they used language frequently, but also agreed that they were more prepared for their deployment in terms of language and cultural understanding than ARSOF personnel reported. ARSOF personnel reported feeling even less prepared for missions outside their AOR, as did AFSOF personnel, although fewer than five AFSOF personnel responded, making interpretation of their data difficult. Within ARSOF, RC personnel reported feeling less prepared for their most recent deployment in terms of language and cultural understanding than AC personnel.

Across deployment types (both inside and outside their AOR), SOF personnel disagreed ($M =$ 43.6) that they were well prepared for deployment, and agreed ($M = 67.5$) that they used their language skills frequently while on deployment. SOF personnel more strongly disagreed that they were well prepared for missions outside of their AOR ($M = 28.4$) than for missions inside of their AOR ($M = 52.0$). SOF personnel also reported that they used their skills more frequently on deployments inside their AOR ($M = 78.2$) than on deployments outside their AOR ($M = 48.5$).

SOF personnel indicated being most prepared in terms of language and cultural understanding for FID ($M = 55.6$) and CT core tasks ($M = 55.4$). SOF personnel reported using language most frequently for FID ($M = 83.6$) and CT ($M = 77.1$) core tasks. SOF personnel reported using language infrequently ($M = 35.7$) for SOF core tasks. Across mission types, SOF personnel reported being less prepared for missions outside their AOR than missions inside their AOR. SOF personnel also reported using language more frequently inside their AOR than outside their AOR across SOF core task types.

Outside AOR Deployment. When evaluating responses from SOF personnel overall, higher levels of proficiency were seen as more necessary for missions inside of their AOR than for missions outside of their AOR. ARSOF personnel reported more difficulties with language outside of their AOR than AFSOF personnel and ARSOF personnel were also more likely to report that their official or required language suffered as a result of being deployed outside of their AOR. SF RC personnel experienced slightly more language-related deficiencies than SF AC personnel. However for CA and PSYOP personnel, the same pattern was not observed. Although ARSOF personnel consistently reported that their current official or required language proficiency suffered as a result of these missions, they felt that they would be able to regain proficiency in their official or required language. RC personnel were more confident than AC personnel that they would be able to regain their previous proficiency.

SOF personnel responded to items regarding perceptions of deployments outside of their AOR. SOF personnel who responded to these items disagreed ($M = 28.5$) that they were able to meet the language-related requirements of the mission. SOF personnel also agreed ($M = 78.7$) that while on this mission, they experienced language-related issues or deficiencies. Although SOF personnel agreed ($M = 57.9$) that their proficiency in their official or required language suffered because of this deployment, they agreed ($M = 67.3$) that they felt confident that they would be able to regain previous proficiency in their official or required language.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel commonly reported foreign internal defense (FID), psychological operations (PYSOP), unconventional warfare (UW), and civil affairs operations (CAO) as their primary SOF core task while on the most recent deployment.

- For their most recent deployment inside their AOR, AFSOF personnel were primarily involved in FID and counterterrorism (CT) tasks, while ARSOF personnel were primarily assigned to PSYOP, FID, UW, and CAO tasks.
- For the most recent deployment outside their AOR, AFSOF personnel engaged primarily in FID core tasks, while UW core tasks were most common for ARSOF personnel.
- The ideal level of proficiency for SOF personnel varied by mission type, with higher proficiency ideal for PSYOP, CAO, and FID missions, and lower levels of proficiency required for DA or SR missions.
- SOF personnel indicated that a higher level of proficiency was needed for missions inside their AOR than for missions outside their AOR.
- SOF personnel reported using 'Listening tasks' the most frequently, and 'Writing tasks' the least frequently while on the most recent deployment.
- ARSOF personnel indicated that 'Building rapport' was the most important language skill, while AFSOF personnel indicated that 'Military/technical language' was the most important skill.
- AFSOF personnel indicated that they were more prepared for their most recent mission in terms of language and cultural understanding than ARSOF personnel.
- Within ARSOF, RC personnel reported feeling less prepared for their most recent deployment in terms of language and cultural understanding than AC personnel.
- SF AC, SF RC, and PSYOP RC personnel reported feeling more prepared in terms of language and cultural understanding than CA RC and PSYOP AC personnel.
- SOF personnel disagreed that they were able to meet the language-related requirements of the mission for their most recent mission outside of their AOR.
- SOF personnel who indicated being deployed outside their AOR reported feeling less prepared in terms of language and cultural understanding than those deployed inside their AOR.
- ARSOF personnel reported more difficulty with language than AFSOF personnel for deployments outside of their AOR.

SECTION 3: INTERPRETERS

Introduction

Respondents were asked about their experience using interpreters both inside and outside of their normal AOR. Items assessed the frequency with which a respondent or a respondents' unit/command utilized different categories of interpreters and evaluated specific attributes of the interpreters, such as dependability and competence. Detailed information regarding the findings from these surveys and a complete list of questions can be found in the *Unit Leadership Survey Report, SOF Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report, and Air Force Operator Survey Report*.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. A total of 136 unit leaders respondents answered the section regarding the use of interpreters *inside* AOR. They were categorized as follows: 43 Unit Commanders, 13 SWOA/SEAs, 54 Staff Officers, and 25 CLPMs. A total of 102 unit leaders answered the section regarding the use of interpreters *outside* AOR. They were categorized as follows: 29 Unit Commanders, 9 SWOA/SEAs, 44 Staff Officers, and 20 CLPMs.

SOF Personnel. A total of 199 respondents indicated that they had been deployed with a SOF unit and used an interpreter on a mission in the past four years, and therefore answered the section regarding use of interpreters. One hundred and eighty eight were classified as ARSOF personnel and 10 were classified as AFSOF personnel. A total of 119 respondents further indicated that they had been deployed *outside* of their AOR in the past four years and had used an interpreter on a mission in the past four years. Therefore, they answered the section about the most recent deployment *outside* of their unit's normal AOR. One hundred and twelve were classified as ARSOF personnel and seven were classified as AFSOF personnel.

Findings

Overall Findings

Unit leaders and SOF personnel agreed that their units are highly dependent on interpreters. ARSOF personnel were more likely than AFSOF personnel to report frequent use of interpreters both inside and outside their AOR and to report that they were too dependent on interpreters. ARSOF personnel were also slightly more likely than AFSOF personnel to indicate that they have observed situations where interpreters have compromised the mission outcome. Unit leaders were more likely to indicate experiencing problems with interpreters, while SOF personnel were somewhat more favorable in their views of interpreters. SOF personnel rated the interpreters that they used as moderately competent and trustworthy, and also strongly agreed that they were essential for mission success. RC unit leaders and personnel had stronger dependency on interpreters than AC leaders and personnel, as well as a higher indication of problems on missions due to interpreter usage. For outside-AOR missions, dependency on interpreters increased greatly, as did the frequency of use and positive evaluations of the interpreters.

Unit Leadership Findings

Unit leaders indicated that interpreters were used very frequently for deployments both inside and outside of the unit's normal AOR. All groups of unit leaders indicated that their units

were too dependent on interpreters and agreed that the personnel in their unit would depend less on interpreters if they had higher levels of language proficiency. RC leaders indicated that members of their unit/command were more dependent on interpreters than AC leaders. Overall, unit leaders reported using CAT I interpreters (i.e., local hire, indigenous personnel, not vetted, or U.S. citizens, not vetted) more frequently than CAT II/III interpreters (i.e., US citizens with secret or top secret clearance), a finding especially pronounced for CLPMs. Other findings reveal that CAT I interpreters are used most frequently for special reconnaissance (SR), UW, FID, and CAO core tasks, while CAT II/III interpreters are used the most frequently for PSYOP, CT, and IO core tasks. RC leaders reported using CAT I interpreters more frequently, while AC leaders utilized both types of interpreters equally. There were problems reported with using interpreters while deployed for all SOF core task/mission types, especially for CT and DA core tasks. RC personnel in the unit commander and SWOA/SEA groups reported having more problems with interpreters than other groups.

Unit leaders expressed having issues or difficulties using interpreters outside of their AOR. Most unit leaders reported that they used interpreters more frequently outside of their AOR than inside of their AOR, although SWOA/SEAs disagreed with this statement.

Unit leaders reported that interpreters are very often required for mission success ($M = 90.7$). In addition, unit leaders reported using CAT I interpreters more frequently ($M = 70.4$) than CAT II/III interpreters ($M = 59.4$). All unit leader subgroups responded similarly to these items.

CAT I interpreters were used more frequently than CAT II/III interpreters for a number of SOF core tasks, including UW, FID, and CAO ($M = 75.9, 61.1, 81.1,$ and 45.8). However, for PSYOP and IO missions, unit leaders reported a higher usage of CAT II/III ($M = 70.5$ and 78.6) interpreters than CAT I interpreters ($M = 65.2, 64.3$). Across all types of SOF core tasks, interpreters were indicated as being required very often. However, unit leaders who indicated that their primary SOF core task was FID reported that interpreters were required for missions less often ($M = 80.0$) than those who indicated other primary mission types.

There is virtually no difference in responses for those who use CAT I interpreters versus CAT II/III interpreters. Overall, unit leaders agreed that their unit/command is too dependent on interpreters ($M = 68.1$) and that their unit/command would depend less on interpreters if their personnel had higher levels of proficiency ($M = 82.7$). Despite the belief that members of the unit/command are too dependent on interpreters, unit leaders also indicated that using interpreters enhances success in their unit/command ($M = 71.2$). These findings indicate that while dependency on interpreters is undesirable, it is also necessary for mission success given the current level of language proficiency.

Unit leaders were also asked specifically about interpreter use outside of their AOR. These attitudes were also analyzed by SOF core task. Unit leaders disagreed that their unit/command has experienced no issues or problems when using interpreters outside of the normal AOR ($M = 35.9$). Unit leaders also indicated that their unit/command uses interpreters more frequently outside the normal AOR than inside the normal AOR ($M = 71.8$). All other subgroups reported similar attitudes. Respondents who indicated being deployed on PSYOP core tasks reported the fewest problems with interpreters outside of their normal AOR ($M = 40.7$), although this response indicates that they still experienced some problems. Unit leaders consistently agreed that their unit/command frequently used interpreters when outside of their normal AOR ($M = 86.9$). This finding held across all SOF core task types. Unit leaders

reported a moderately high level of agreement ($M = 71.8$) that their unit/command used interpreters more frequently outside of their AOR than inside their AOR. This finding was consistent for unit commanders ($M = 75.0$), staff officers ($M = 71.0$), and CLPMs ($M = 80.1$). However, SWOA/SEAs disagreed that their unit/command uses interpreters more frequently outside their normal AOR than inside their normal AOR ($M = 44.4$).

The items regarding deployments outside of a unit's AOR were also examined further based on responses from two groups: Unit commanders/SWOA/SEAs and staff officers/CLPMs. Mean scores were analyzed according to the type of SOF personnel in the unit leader's unit/command. Regardless of the type of SOF personnel under the unit leader's command, opinions toward the use of interpreters outside of the AOR were fairly similar.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Unit leaders indicated that interpreters were used very frequently for deployments both inside and outside of the unit's normal AOR.
- Most unit leaders, with the exception of SWOA/SEAs, reported that they used interpreters more frequently outside of their AOR than inside of their AOR.
- Unit leaders indicated that their units were too dependent on interpreters and agreed that the personnel in their unit would depend less on interpreters if they had higher levels of language proficiency.
- Reserve component (RC) unit leaders indicated that members of their unit/command were more dependent on interpreters than active component (AC) unit leaders.
- There were problems reported with using interpreters while deployed for all mission types, especially for counterterrorism (CT) and direct action (DA) missions.
- RC personnel in the unit commander and SWOA/SEA groups reported having more problems with interpreters than other groups.
- Unit leaders reported using CAT I more frequently than CAT II/III interpreters, a finding especially pronounced for CLPMs.
- CAT I interpreters are used most frequently on SR, UW, FID, and CAO missions, while CAT II/III interpreters are used the most frequently on PSYOP, CT, and IO missions.

SOF Personnel Findings

Findings from these sections suggest that in general, SOF personnel are highly dependent on interpreters. Attitudes toward interpreters were mixed. Ratings of competence and trustworthiness were slightly positive. There was high agreement that interpreters are essential for mission success. Attitudes toward interpreters and indications that interpreters are essential on deployment were even more positive for missions outside of personnel's AOR. Most SOF personnel indicated that their unit frequently uses interpreters on deployment. ARSOF personnel were more likely than AFSOF personnel to report frequent use of interpreters both inside and outside their AOR and to report that they were too dependent on interpreters. ARSOF personnel were also slightly more likely than AFSOF personnel to indicate that they have observed situations where interpreters have compromised the mission outcome. Within ARSOF, RC personnel reported a greater reliance on, as well as a more positive view of, interpreters than AC personnel for missions inside of their AOR. Both AC and RC personnel reported a strong need for and confidence in interpreters outside of their AOR. Within AFSOF, PSYOP personnel indicated the most dependence on interpreters. Also, ARSOF personnel indicated a stronger dependence on interpreters than

ARSOF other respondents (see *Army Operator Survey Report* for more details regarding this group of respondents).

SOF personnel agreed ($M = 70.8$) that their unit frequently uses interpreters when deployed inside of the normal AOR and disagreed ($M = 29.7$) that they can be as effective on their missions without an interpreter. When evaluating that quality of interpreters, SOF personnel slightly agreed that most interpreters were trustworthy ($M = 59.0$) and competent ($M = 63.1$). However, SOF personnel also agreed ($M = 71.4$) that they believe their unit is too dependent on interpreters and also indicated that they have observed situations where interpreters have compromised the mission outcome ($M = 62.0$). SOF personnel agreed ($M = 76.7$) that if they were more proficient in their current or official language, they would be less likely to rely on interpreters.

SOF personnel deployed more than six times inside their AOR agreed ($M = 81.5$) that if they were more proficient in their current or official language, they would be less likely to rely on interpreters. However, personnel who reported being deployed inside their AOR one or two times did as well ($M = 79.7$). The same pattern of results was found for personnel who indicated being deployed outside of their AOR. For some items, there was a difference observed depending on the number of deployments. For example, SOF personnel who reported being deployed inside of their AOR more than six times agreed less ($M = 69.1$) than personnel who had been deployed inside their AOR only once or twice ($M = 78.2$) that interpreters were essential for carrying out missions. However, personnel who reported being deployed outside of their AOR more than six times responded similarly ($M = 68.6$) to personnel who had been deployed outside their AOR only once or twice ($M = 70.1$) when responding to the item, "Interpreters are essential for carrying out missions."

Many of the same questions that were asked regarding interpreter use in general, were also asked specifically in relation to interpreter use on the most recent deployment outside of their AOR. The findings reveal a similar pattern of attitudes. SOF personnel agreed ($M = 88.0$) that using interpreters was essential for carrying out the mission and disagreed ($M = 20.0$) that they could have been as effective on the mission without using interpreters. SOF personnel also agreed that the interpreters used on the mission were trustworthy ($M = 67.4$) and competent ($M = 71.9$). These findings reveal more positive opinions of interpreters used outside of their AOR than interpreters used in general. SOF personnel agreed ($M = 88.0$) that their unit frequently uses interpreters when outside of the normal AOR, which is much higher than responses to the same items regarding deployments inside of the normal AOR, in which SOF personnel agreed ($M = 70.8$) that their unit frequently uses interpreters when inside the normal AOR.

For the most part, perceptions of interpreter use on the most recent deployment outside of their AOR by interpreter type (i.e., CAT I or CAT II/III) were similar regardless of interpreter type. However, SOF personnel indicated that CAT II/III interpreters used on the mission were more trustworthy ($M = 75.0$) than CAT I interpreters ($M = 64.8$). Also, SOF personnel who indicated using CAT II/III interpreters agreed more ($M = 82.1$) than SOF personnel who indicated using CAT I interpreters ($M = 73.7$) that they felt that during the mission they were too dependent on interpreters.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel indicated that their unit frequently uses interpreters on deployment.

- SOF personnel are highly dependent on interpreters both inside and outside of their AOR, although they are more dependent on interpreters outside of their AOR.
- SOF personnel provided slightly positive ratings of interpreters in terms of their trustworthiness and competence.
- ARSOF personnel were more likely than AFSOF personnel to report frequent use of interpreters both inside and outside of their AOR.
- ARSOF personnel were more likely than AFSOF personnel to report that they were too dependent on interpreters and slightly more likely to indicate that they have observed situations where interpreters have compromised the mission outcome.
- Attitudes toward interpreters and indications that interpreters are essential on deployment were even more positive for missions outside of personnel's AOR.
- Within ARSOF, RC personnel reported a greater reliance on interpreters than AC personnel for missions inside their AOR, although both groups reported a similar reliance on interpreters outside of their AOR.
- ARSOF personnel indicated a stronger dependence on interpreters than ARSOF other respondents.

SECTION 4: OFFICIAL LANGUAGE TESTING

Introduction

This section presents the experiences with and impressions of official language testing by integrating the perceptions of SOF personnel and unit leaders. Items in this section inquired about their perceptions of two official language tests, the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and the Defense Language Institute Oral Proficiency Interview (DLI OPI). Issues that were covered included the general attitudes toward language testing and an evaluation of the DLPT's relatedness to required job skills. For detailed findings and a complete list of questions from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report, Air Force Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report,* and the *Unit Leadership Survey Report*.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. A total of 156 unit leaders answered the section regarding official language testing. They were categorized as follows: 57 Unit Commanders, 16 SWOA/SEAs, 56 Staff Officers, and 27 CLPMs.

SOF Personnel. SOF personnel who indicated that they had taken the DLPT in the past four years answered items in this section. A total of 253 SOF personnel responded to this section. There were 20 AFSOF personnel respondents. Two-hundred thirty-two were classified as ARSOF personnel. One-hundred fifty-five of these were classified as ARSOF AC personnel, while 77 were RC personnel. There was one Navy SEAL respondent.

Findings

Overall Findings

Findings suggest that unit leaders and SOF personnel feel differently about official language testing. Many SOF personnel do not believe the DLPT is an accurate measure of their proficiency, while unit leaders indicated that the DLPT was a good indicator of proficiency. Both unit leaders and SOF personnel indicated that the DLPT was not related to what personnel do on deployment. Both SOF personnel and some members of unit leadership felt that the DLI OPI was a better indicator of language proficiency. SOF personnel's attitudes toward the DLPT did not appear to influence their motivation to do well on the test. Unit leaders reported that they encourage personnel to do well on the DLPT and stay current with its requirements. SOF personnel's own test scores influenced their evaluation of the DLPT's relatedness to mission success, but not the seriousness with which they take the test. Exposure to the DLPT's alternative, the DLI OPI, did not have a large effect on their opinions, although personnel did evaluate the DLI OPI more positively than the DLPT.

Unit Leadership Findings

Regarding attitudes toward the DLPT, unit leaders indicated that they place high importance on the DLPT, but that they believe it has low relatedness to mission performance. Unit leaders indicated that despite their mixed opinions about its value, they encourage personnel to do well on the DLPT and stay current with testing requirements. They only moderately agreed that the DLPT is a good indicator of successful training and the ability to do well on missions. Unit leaders also disagreed that the content of the DLPT is related to mission performance and agreed that the DLI OPI is more related to mission performance. Unit

commanders tended to express lower opinions of the DLPT than other unit leadership groups, while SWOA/SEAs tended to be more positive than other unit leaders in their evaluation of the DLPT. RC leaders tended to hold moderately higher opinions of the DLPT than AC leaders.

Unit leaders had generally consistent opinions of the DLPT. Unit leaders only slightly agreed that DLPT scores were a good indicator of how well someone did in their language training ($M = 55.1$) and that DLPT scores allow them to predict whose skills are ready for deployment ($M = 52.9$). They indicated that they would be more likely to send someone for advanced training if they achieved a high DLPT score. However, unit leaders disagreed that the content of the DLPT was related to the tasks personnel perform on deployment ($M = 33.4$), and agreed that the DLI OPI is more related to mission performance ($M = 65.9$). Furthermore, unit leaders slightly disagreed ($M = 47.9$) that DLPT scores should be used to make promotion decisions.

Despite mixed opinions of the DLPT, unit leaders reported encouraging their personnel to do well on the test ($M = 76.0$) and to stay current with their testing requirements ($M = 81.0$). These findings seem to reveal a disconnect between unit leader's attitudes toward testing and their attitudes toward mission use of language. It seems that although unit leaders support DLPT testing and find it useful in some respects (i.e., identifying whose skills are ready for development) that a language test that is more related to mission performance would be preferred. It is important to remember that the DLPT is the official test, so unit leaders will support it. However, this does not mean that the DLPT is useful or accurate.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Unit leaders indicated that they place a high level of importance on DLPT scores, although they do not believe the DLPT is highly related to mission performance.
- Unit leaders indicated that they would be more likely to send personnel for advanced training if they achieved a high DLPT score.
- Unit leaders slightly disagreed that the DLPT should be used for making promotion decisions.
- Unit leaders indicated that despite their mixed opinions about its value, they encourage personnel to do well on the DLPT and stay current with testing requirements.
- Unit leaders indicated that the DLI OPI is more related to mission performance than the DLPT.
- RC unit leaders tended to hold moderately higher opinions of the DLPT than AC unit leaders.

SOF Personnel Findings

Findings from this section suggest that many members of SOF personnel do not believe that the DLPT is an accurate measure of their proficiency. However, this does not appear to influence their motivation to do well on the test. SOF personnel's own test scores influenced their evaluation of the DLPT's relatedness to mission success. Exposure to the DLI OPI did not have a large effect on their opinions. AFSOF personnel were more positive than ARSOF personnel in their evaluations of the DLPT and its relatedness to mission success. Within ARSOF, AC personnel had lower opinions of the DLPT's relatedness than RC personnel. However, both AC and RC personnel reported taking the test quite seriously. Within ARSOF, no large differences existed between SF, CA, and PSYOP personnel.

SOF personnel disagreed that the content of the DLPT is clearly related to what they do on deployment ($M = 36.4$) and slightly disagreed that their DLPT scores accurately reflect their ability to use language in the field ($M = 43.2$). However, SOF personnel slightly agreed that personnel who perform well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field ($M = 57.1$). Attitudes toward the DLPT in terms of its relatedness to job performance were similar regardless of whether or not respondents had taken the DLI OPI. The respondent's own level of DLPT proficiency appeared to have a greater effect on their responses. Those who had higher DLPT proficiency (2-2 or above) expressed more positive attitudes toward the DLPT. For example, those who indicated having a higher DLPT score slightly agreed ($M = 52.3$) that their DLPT scores accurately reflect their ability to use language while on the job, while those with a lower DLPT score disagreed ($M = 34.2$).

Regarding attitudes toward the DLPT, SOF personnel strongly disagreed that they marked the same answer for every question on the DLPT to get it over quickly ($M = 12.5$). SOF personnel also disagreed that they have memorized the answers to the DLPT since it never changes ($M = 15.2$). Although responses to these questions seem to indicate that SOF personnel take the DLPT seriously and try to do well on the test, SOF personnel also moderately agreed that the DLI OPI is more related to mission performance than the DLPT ($M = 62.9$). Neither the respondent's experience with the DLI OPI nor the respondent's DLPT rated language proficiency impacted responses to these questions about the DLPT.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel indicated that the DLPT is not an accurate measure of their proficiency, but still indicated that they are motivated to perform well on the test.
- AFSOF personnel expressed more positive views that ARSOF personnel about the DLPT's relatedness to mission performance and the seriousness with which they take the test.
- Within ARSOF, AC personnel had lower opinions of the DLPT's relatedness than RC personnel. However, both AC and RC personnel reported taking the test quite seriously.

SECTION 5: FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY PAY

Introduction

This section addresses Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP) by integrating the perceptions of SOF personnel and unit leaders. The items in this section sought information regarding FLPP procedures, as well as the motivating effect of FLPP on personnel. For detailed findings and a complete list of questions from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report, Air Force Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report,* and the *Unit Leadership Survey Report*.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. A total of 156 unit leaders completed this section. There were 57 Unit Commanders, 16 SWOA/SEAs, 56 Staff Officers, and 27 CLPMs.

SOF Personnel. A total of 297 SOF personnel responded to this section. There were 23 AFSOF personnel respondents. Two-hundred seventy-three were classified as ARSOF personnel. One-hundred sixty-seven of these were classified as ARSOF AC personnel, while 106 were RC personnel. There was one Navy SEAL respondent.

Findings

Overall Findings

One can conclude from findings in this section that there are mixed attitudes regarding FLPP's ability to motivate and that the overall procedure for allocating FLPP is perceived as ineffective and in need of adjustment. The results indicated that increasing the amount FLPP would highly increase the motivating effect of FLPP, as stated in the findings from SOF personnel and unit leaders. SOF personnel also suggested that increasing time and resources for training would also increase the motivating effect of FLPP. Findings from unit leaders suggest that FLPP is not a sufficient incentive in motivating personnel in their command to maintain proficiency. In terms of the fairness of FLPP procedures, SOF personnel who have not received FLPP in the past four years provided more negative evaluations regarding the fairness of procedures for allocating FLPP. ARSOF RC personnel indicated very negative opinions regarding the fairness of FLPP procedures. SOF personnel overall disagreed that FLPP reflects the amount of time and effort that they put into language training.

Unit Leadership Findings

Overall, unit leaders had low opinions of FLPP. All groups of unit leaders disagreed that FLPP was an effective incentive for SOF personnel, although they somewhat agreed that procedures for assigning FLPP upheld the intent of motivating proficiency. Unit commanders agreed that most of the procedures for assigning FLPP upheld the intent of motivating proficiency, while CLPMs disagreed. Those who currently receive FLPP evaluated it more positively in terms of its effectiveness and motivating potential than those who do not currently receive FLPP.

Unit leaders slightly disagreed that FLPP was an effective incentive for their personnel ($M =$ 43.9) and also slightly disagreed that FLPP was a sufficient incentive for personnel to maintain language skills on their own time ($M = 42.3$). They only slightly agreed that the

procedures concerning FLPP uphold the intent of motivating proficiency ($M = 55.0$). Unit leaders were also asked about potential ways to increase the motivating effect of FLPP. The most common response across all groups was to increase the amount of FLPP. However, the next most frequent responses were that FLPP would be more motivating if the unit provided more time and resources for training.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Overall, unit leaders had low opinions of FLPP.
- Unit leaders reported that FLPP was not an effective motivator for SOF personnel.
- The majority of unit leaders somewhat agreed that the procedures for assigning FLPP upheld the intent of motivating proficiency, although CLPMs disagreed.
- Unit leaders who currently receive FLPP evaluated it more positively than those who do not currently receive FLPP.
- Unit leaders who currently receive FLPP indicated more favorable attitudes toward the procedures for assigning FLPP and the quality of FLPP as an incentive than those who do not receive FLPP.

SOF Personnel Findings

SOF personnel who received FLPP in the past four years had favorable attitudes toward its ability to motivate, but neutral attitudes regarding the fairness and simplicity of FLPP procedures. SOF personnel who had not received FLPP in the past four years had negative evaluations of its motivating ability and the fairness and simplicity of procedures for allocating FLPP. Both groups strongly disagreed that FLPP reflects the amount of time it takes to acquire language skills. Possible ways to improve FLPP's motivating effect included increasing the amount and providing more training time and resources.

AFSOF personnel who have received FLPP in the past four years were more positive in their evaluations than ARSOF personnel across all dimensions. AFSOF personnel who indicated they have not received FLPP in the past four years, however, were similar to ARSOF personnel in their negative evaluations. Within ARSOF, RC personnel were more negative than AC personnel in general. Even RC personnel who have received FLPP in the past four years were neutral in evaluating FLPP's motivating effectiveness, and negative in evaluating its fairness and simplicity. RC personnel who have received FLPP in the past four years strongly disagreed that FLPP reflected the time and effort they put into language training.

SOF personnel who had received FLPP in the past four years had more favorable attitudes toward FLPP than those who have not received FLPP in the past four years. SOF personnel who have received FLPP in the past four years agreed that FLPP motivates them to acquire a new language during their personal time ($M = 67.1$) and also agreed that FLPP motivates them to maintain language proficiency during personal time ($M = 72.4$), while those who have not received FLPP in the past four years disagreed slightly ($M = 47.1, 45.8$). In addition, SOF personnel who have received FLPP in the past four years agreed somewhat more than those who have not received FLPP in the past four years that the procedures for allocating FLPP are fair ($M = 55.7, 41.3$) and straight-forward and simple ($M = 58.3, 46.9$). However, regardless of whether or not they have received FLPP in the past four years SOF personnel disagreed that FLPP reflects one's efforts in learning a language ($M = 39.2, 35.1$).

Respondents were presented with seven potential changes to the FLPP system and asked to select all of the ways that they believed FLPP could be made more motivating. When SOF personnel were asked to select the options that would increase the motivating potential of FLPP, the most popular answer was that FLPP would be more motivating if the amounts were increased (67.0%). A large percentage of SOF personnel also indicated that FLPP would be more motivating if the unit would provide more time for training (59.0%) and if the unit would provide more training resources (54.4%).

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel who received FLPP in the past four years had favorable attitudes toward its ability to motivate, but neutral attitudes regarding the fairness and simplicity of FLPP procedures. SOF personnel who had not received FLPP in the past four years provided more negative evaluations of its motivating ability, fairness, and simplicity than those who had received FLPP in the past four years.
- SOF personnel disagreed that the amount of FLPP they receive reflects the effort they put into learning language.
- Potential ways to increase FLPP's motivating effect included increasing the amount and providing more training time and resources
- AFSOF personnel who have received FLPP in the past four years were more positive in their evaluations than ARSOF personnel across all dimensions. AFSOF personnel who indicated they have not received FLPP in the past four years, however, were similar to ARSOF personnel in their negative evaluations.
- ARSOF RC personnel were more negative in their evaluation of FLPP than AC personnel in general.

SECTION 6: LANGUAGE TRAINING

Introduction

This section contains questions regarding experiences with and impressions of language training by integrating the perceptions of SOF personnel and unit leaders. SOF personnel were asked about their training experiences. The three subsections in this part of the report (Initial Acquisition Language Training, Sustainment/Enhancement Language Training, and Immersion Training) were only answered by those personnel who indicated having experiences with these types of training. Unit leaders also provided an evaluation of language training, specifically training in the command language program (CLP). For detailed findings and a complete list of questions from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report*, *Air Force Operator Survey Report*, *Army Operator Survey Report*, and the *Unit Leadership Survey Report*.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. Only CLPMs were eligible to answer specific questions about the quality of the instructor and curriculum in the CLP, although all unit leaders were asked to evaluate the overall quality of the CLP. Unit leaders indicated that more than half of their units provide annual language training for personnel (63.7%). A majority of unit leaders (79.7%) indicated that their command has a CLP. Of the unit leaders who responded to the survey, 69.6% have received language training paid for and/or sponsored by the military or government.

SOF Personnel. A total of 64.8% of SOF personnel indicated that they had received language training paid for and/or sponsored by the military or government during their military career. 50.9% of SOF personnel who responded to the survey indicated that they had received military-provided training in their current official, or required language in the past four years. Of these respondents, 24.5% of SOF personnel indicated that they had received initial acquisition language training, 12.6% indicated that they had received sustainment/enhancement language training, and 13.8% indicated they had received both types of training in the past four years. Only 14.1% of SOF personnel indicated that they had participated in military-provided immersion training.

Initial Acquisition Language Training Findings

Overall Findings

SOF personnel and unit leaders expressed similar attitudes when evaluating initial acquisition language training. Unit leaders indicated that SOF personnel did not arrive at the unit mission-capable in their AOR language. In evaluating their initial acquisition language training, SOF personnel indicated that the instructor failed to adequately incorporate SOF considerations into his/her teaching. However, SOF personnel also indicated that their instructors were knowledgeable and encouraged students to speak in the target language. Furthermore, unit leaders indicated that Soldiers who received training at DLI (Monterey) were more prepared than those who received training at USAJFKSWCS. The majority of SOF personnel who responded to the survey indicated that they received training at USAJFKSWCS, although some respondents indicated receiving training at DLI (Monterey). USAJFKSWCS students indicated that their instructors were less effective in preparing them to use language skills than DLI students.

In rating the curriculum, SOF personnel confirmed unit leaders' evaluation that students who received training at DLI were more prepared than those who received training at USAJFKWSCS. Students who received training at DLI evaluated their training more positively than students who received training at USAJFKSWCS. Students who received training at USAJFKSWCS also indicated that the curriculum did not cover their needs regarding mission-related vocabulary, that the materials contained frequent errors, and that there was more emphasis placed on 'Formal language' and less on 'Street/slang language.' Students who received training at DLI also indicated that the curriculum placed emphasis on the 'Formal language,' but also placed more emphasis on 'Slang/street language' than the curriculum at USAJFKSWCS.

Unit Leadership Findings

Most unit leaders felt that their personnel did not arrive at the unit mission-capable in their AOR language. They also indicated that personnel coming from the Defense Language Institute (DLI) were more prepared than those coming from United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) or their unit's Command Language Program (CLP). Unit commanders assigned the lowest ratings to training in the unit/CLP. Results from each subgroup were fairly consistent, with the exception of staff officers, who had low opinions of all training, including training at DLI. Open-ended suggestions to improve the training program focused on including immersion training, increasing training length, improving placement for language schools, and increasing funding/pay.

Overall unit leaders disagreed ($M = 27.7$) that their personnel arrived at the command mission-capable in their language. The results for unit commanders, SWOA/SEAs, staff officers, and CLPMs revealed a similar pattern of disagreement across these groups. Unit leaders were asked to rate how well personnel performed in the normal AOR after receiving training from three different sources: DLI (Monterey), USAJFKSWCS, and the unit's CLP. Unit leaders showed a moderately high level of agreement (M= 69.1) with the statement that personnel can perform well after receiving training from DLI. However, unit leaders moderately disagreed that personnel could perform well in the normal AOR after receiving training at USAJFKSWCS ($M = 43.0$) or from the unit's CLP ($M = 38.9$). This finding supports more positive views of training received at DLI than training received either at USAJFKSWCS or in the unit's CLP.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Unit leaders indicated that new personnel show up at their commands not mission-capable in terms of language.
- Unit leaders indicated that official language training is essential for mission success.
- Unit leaders indicated that personnel who received training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) were more prepared that those who received training at United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) or in the unit's Command Language Program (CLP).

SOF Personnel Findings

The majority of respondents who were rating their instructor and curriculum received training at USAJFKSWCS, while a small percentage of respondents were rating the training they received at DLI (Monterey). In evaluating their instructor for initial acquisition training, SOF personnel indicated that the instructor was knowledgeable and encouraged students to use language, but failed to adequately incorporate SOF concerns into his/her teaching. Students who received training at USAJFKSWCS indicated that their instructor was less effective in preparing them to use language than did DLI (Monterey) students. SOF personnel who received training in CAT I/II languages had higher ratings of their instructor than those who received training in CAT III/IV languages. AFSOF personnel were more favorable in their evaluations in general, especially with regard to the instructor's use of current examples and knowledge of current language use. Within ARSOF, RC personnel had consistently higher ratings of their instructor than AC personnel. Within ARSOF, CA personnel were more likely to report negative evaluations of their instructor than SF or PSYOP personnel.

Overall, SOF personnel strongly agreed ($M = 82.3$) that the instructor encouraged students to speak in the target language and that the instructor was knowledgeable about how language is currently used ($M = 76.4$). SOF personnel agreed ($M = 71.4$) that the instructor was effective in preparing them to use language skills. However, SOF personnel slightly disagreed ($M = 47.8$) that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations in his/her teaching objectives.

The majority of SOF personnel (69.6%) indicated that they received initial acquisition language training at USAJFKSWCS. As far as other sources of training, 17.6% of SOF personnel indicated that they received their initial acquisition language training from DLI (Monterey), 11.2% indicated that they received training in their unit's CLP, and 1.6% indicated receiving training at DLI (Washington, DC). When evaluating whether the instructor incorporated SOF considerations in his/her teaching objectives, SOF personnel who indicated that they received language training at DLI (Monterey) disagreed ($M = 37.5$), while SOF personnel who received training at USAJFKSWCS expressed a more neutral opinion ($M = 49.7$). Compared to SOF personnel who received initial acquisition language training at DLI (Monterey) ($M = 87.5$), SOF personnel who received training at USAJFKSWCS moderately agreed ($M = 66.1$) that the instructor was effective in preparing students to use language skills.

SOF personnel who indicated that their initial acquisition language training was in a CAT III/IV language expressed slightly more negative attitudes toward their instructor than SOF personnel who indicated that their initial acquisition language training was in a CAT I/II language. For example, while SOF personnel who indicated that their training was in a CAT I/II language responded neutrally ($M = 52.0$) that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations, SOF personnel who indicated that their training was in a CAT III/IV language slightly disagreed ($M = 44.8$) with this statement.

In ratings of curriculum, DLI received more positive evaluations than USAJFKSWCS. Across all sources of training, SOF personnel indicated that the curriculum placed more emphasis on 'Formal language' than on 'Slang/street language.' Students from USAJFKSWCS also indicated that the curriculum did not cover their needs regarding mission-related vocabulary. Overall, SOF personnel reported that their training modules contained errors. Only slight differences between language categories (CAT I/II and CAT III/IV) existed in evaluations of curriculum. AFSOF personnel were more likely than ARSOF personnel to indicate that the curriculum was prepackaged and not customized to SOF, but

also more likely to indicate that their curriculum was free from error. Within ARSOF, RC personnel had consistently higher ratings of their training curriculum. Also, PSYOP personnel disagreed that their curriculum was pre-packaged and not customized to SOF, although SF and CA personnel agreed with this statement.

SOF personnel agreed ($M = 74.6$) that the primary emphasis of the curriculum was on the formal language and disagreed ($M = 39.4$) that the curriculum included slang and/or street language. SOF personnel also disagreed ($M = 35.8$) that the materials used in training were free from error. SOF personnel agreed ($M = 70.4$) that the curriculum included instruction and practice in all four skills modalities. However, SOF personnel moderately agreed ($M = 60.6$) that the curriculum was pre-packaged and not customized to SOF.

SOF personnel who received training at USAJFKSWCS somewhat disagreed ($M = 35.8$) that the curriculum included 'Slang/street language,' while SOF personnel who received training at DLI (Monterey) responded neutrally ($M = 50.0$). SOF personnel who received training at USAJFKSWCS slightly disagreed ($M = 43.7$) that the curriculum covered the necessary vocabulary for their jobs and missions, while ARSOF personnel who received training at DLI (Monterey) somewhat agreed ($M = 61.9$). SOF personnel who received training at DLI (Monterey) agreed ($M = 75.0$) that the curriculum was pre-packaged and not customized to SOF. SOF personnel who received training at USAJFKSWCS slightly agreed ($M = 57.9$) that the curriculum was pre-packaged and not customized to SOF.

There were a few minor differences between groups of SOF personnel who indicated CAT I/II language and personnel who indicated CAT III/IV languages in responding to questions about the curriculum. For example, SOF personnel who studied a CAT III/IV language disagreed somewhat more ($M = 31.4$) than SOF personnel who studied a CAT I/II language ($M = 41.5$) that the materials used in training were free from error.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- Most SOF personnel reported receiving their initial acquisition training at USAJFKSWCS, while a smaller percentage indicated receiving training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI).
- SOF personnel evaluated their instructor for initial acquisition language training positively, although they disagreed that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations into his/her teaching objectives and indicated that the curriculum was not customized for SOF needs.
- SOF personnel who received training at DLI rated the curriculum more positively than students who received training at USAJFKSWCS.
- Within ARSOF, RC personnel rated their curriculum and instructor more favorably than ARSOF AC personnel overall for initial acquisition language training.
- SOF personnel agreed that the emphasis in their initial acquisition training was on 'Formal language' rather than 'Slant/street language'

Sustainment/Enhancement Language Training Findings

Overall Findings

When evaluating sustainment/enhancement training, unit leaders reported that the training was important, but that there were too few resources available for this type of training. SOF

personnel also agreed that they would put more effort into language training if the resources were more available. Unit leaders disagreed that the current OPTEMPO made sustainment/enhancement language training a less viable option. SOF personnel, on the other hand, believed that the two barriers they faced were the current OPTEMPO and a lack of training resources. A large percentage of SOF personnel (85.9%) indicated that they received sustainment/enhancement training in their unit. However, when responding to logistical questions regarding sustainment/enhancement language training, the majority of unit leaders indicated that immersion training would be the best mode of instruction for sustainment/enhancement training (See *Immersion Training* for more details). Furthermore, unit leaders disagreed that their unit has an effective CLP, but agreed that their chains of command needed to invest more time in sustainment/enhancement language training and that more money needed to be invested in the CLP.

SOF personnel and CLPMs also evaluated characteristics of the instructor and the curriculum in their CLP. While both SOF personnel and CLPMs expressed positive evaluations of the instructors in the CLP, these groups expressed different opinions when evaluating some aspects of the curriculum. SOF personnel disagreed that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations in his/her teaching objectives, while CLPMs strongly agreed that the curriculum is customized to consider SOF needs. However, CLPMs agreed that the primary focus of the curriculum was on speaking and SOF personnel indicated that their instructor encouraged students to speak in the target language.

Unit Leadership Findings

Immersion training was identified by respondents as the best instructional mode of sustainment/enhancement training. Unit leaders indicated that sustainment/enhancement language training was highly important. However, unit leaders reported that too few resources are available for units to conduct proper sustainment/enhancement training. Most respondents indicated that not enough time was devoted to sustainment/enhancement training in their units. A high degree of consistency was seen across unit leadership groups. RC leaders were more negative in their ratings than AC leaders. When asked about the best way to motivate personnel to maintain proficiency, the most frequent suggestion from unit leaders was to increase pay for proficiency, while other suggestions included offer immersion or other training opportunities, provide opportunities to use skills on deployment, and place more command emphasis on training.

When responding to logistical questions regarding sustainment/enhancement training, a majority of unit leaders (38.6%) indicated that sustainment/enhancement training should occur monthly, while 21.6% of respondents indicated that sustainment/enhancement training should occur quarterly and 16.3% of respondents indicated that sustainment/enhancement training should occur annually. Additionally, there was a wide variety of response to the item inquiring how many weeks per year should be set aside solely for sustainment/enhancement language training in the unit. Most respondents (31.6%) indicated that 3-4 weeks would be appropriate. Finally, 66.9% of unit leaders indicated that immersion training would be the best mode of instruction for sustainment/enhancement training.

Unit leaders indicated that language sustainment training was important, but that there were too few resources available for sustainment/enhancement training. Overall, unit leaders agreed ($M = 74.4$) that language proficiency sustainment was as important as physical fitness training. However, unit leaders disagreed ($M = 35.4$) that the unit conducts a sufficient

number of sustainment and enhancement courses and also disagreed ($M = 37.4$) that their unit has an effective CLP.

Command Language Program Language (CLP) Training. When evaluating the effectiveness of their unit's CLP, unit leaders indicated that they were dissatisfied with the quality of their CLP. Furthermore, unit leaders indicated that more money needs to be invested in the CLP. Unit leaders agreed that official language and cultural training was essential to mission success, but also agreed that their chain of command needs to invest more time in sustainment/enhancement language training. CLPMs agreed the most strongly compared to the other groups that the chain of command needs to invest more time in sustainment/enhancement language training. RC leaders were more dissatisfied than AC leaders with the quality of their CLP.

Unit leaders indicated a high level of agreement ($M = 80.9$) that official language training is essential for mission success, and a very high level of disagreement ($M = 13.5$) with the statement that cultural knowledge is not critical to the mission. Unit leaders agreed ($M = 79.4$) that the chain of command needed to invest more time in sustainment/enhancement language training. Regarding evaluation of the CLP, unit leaders disagreed ($M = 35.6$) that they were satisfied with the quality of the CLP, but agreed ($M = 74.1$) that more money needs to be invested in the CLP.

Instructor/Curriculum Characteristics (CLPM Only). The CLPMs who responded to this section rated the instructors and curriculum favorably. They disagreed that the instructors needed improvement and expressed favorable attitudes toward the instructor's language capabilities. They also expressed positive attitudes regarding the curriculum. They agreed that the curriculum was customized to consider SOF needs and that it was not structured towards getting students to pass the DLPT. RC CLPMs also tended to have a more negative attitude towards the instructors and the curriculum in the CLP. CLPMs also agreed that the curriculum focused mostly on speaking. RC CLPMs tended to have more negative attitudes than AC CLPMs regarding the instructors and the curriculum in the CLP. When respondents were asked to make a suggestion for what one aspect of the CLP they would like to change, the most common response was that there should be more command emphasis on language training. Other suggestions included increasing payment for proficiency and increasing access to training, which was a particular concern for RC leaders.

The CLPMs who responded to this section indicated an overall favorable attitude towards instructors. CLPMs agreed that instructors were proficient enough in English to be effective ($M = 79.2$) and agreed that most instructors were native speakers ($M = 77.9$). CLPMs moderately disagreed that the instructor's teaching skills needed to be improved ($M = 45.8$). With regard to the curriculum, CLPMs agreed that the curriculum is customized to consider SOF needs ($M = 68.3$) and moderately disagreed ($M = 40.3$) that the curriculum was structured to get students to pass the DLPT. Additionally, CLPMs agreed ($M = 66.7$) that the curriculum focused mostly on speaking.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Unit leaders indicated that not enough time and resources are dedicated to sustainment/enhancement language training and that their chains of command need to invest more time in sustainment/enhancement language training.
- Unit leaders were dissatisfied with the quality of their CLP and believe that more money needs to be invested in the CLP.

- RC leaders were more dissatisfied with the quality of their CLP than AC leaders.
- CLPMs expressed positive evaluations of the instructors and curriculum in their CLP.
- CLPMs indicated that the CLP curriculum is customized to SOF considerations and is not structured to get students to pass the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).
- RC CLPMs tended to have more negative attitudes than AC CLPMs regarding the instructors and curriculum in their CLP.

SOF Personnel Findings

Most respondents were rating their experience with sustainment/enhancement training based on training in their unit's CLP in this section, while a much smaller percentage were referring to training received at DLI (Monterey). The most common mode of training was the language lab or classroom setting. As with the previous sections, SOF personnel were asked to evaluate their instructor and the curriculum of their training program or course.

Findings from this section indicate that instructor evaluations did not differ greatly between initial acquisition and sustainment/enhancement. Again, SOF personnel indicated that their instructors were knowledgeable and encouraging. In rating the curriculum, respondents again indicated that the emphasis was on formal language rather than slang/street language. AFSOF personnel were generally more positive than ARSOF personnel in their ratings for instructor and curriculum, but their responses tended to follow the same pattern. One exception was that AFSOF personnel were much more likely to indicate the curriculum was pre-packaged (not customized to SOF).

Within ARSOF, some discrepancies existed. In evaluating the curriculum, SF RC personnel rated it as being pre-packaged and not customized to SOF, while SF AC personnel responded neutrally. This and other findings suggest that a discrepancy exists between the sustainment training experiences of SF AC and SF RC personnel that was not evident for other personnel types.

SOF personnel strongly agreed ($M = 82.7$) that the instructor was knowledgeable about how the language is currently used and also agreed ($M = 84.6$) that the instructor encouraged students to speak in the target language. SOF personnel also moderately agreed ($M = 69.3$) that the instructor was effective in preparing them to use their language skills. However, SOF personnel slightly disagreed ($M = 46.3$) that it was clear that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations in his/her teaching objectives.

A vast majority (85.9%) of SOF personnel indicated receiving sustainment/enhancement training in their unit's CLP, while the remaining personnel indicated receiving training at DLI (Monterey), DLI (Washington, DC), self-study, or other options. Most SOF personnel indicated language lab (40.7%) or classroom (33.7%) as the mode of instruction and 82.6% reported having an instructor for their sustainment/enhancement language training.

In evaluating the curriculum, SOF personnel agreed ($M = 66.1$) that the primary emphasis of the curriculum was on the formal language, and responded neutrally ($M = 50.6$) that the curriculum included 'Slang/street language.' SOF personnel also slightly agreed ($M = 53.8$) that the materials used in training were free from error. Comparing the responses from these items to the same items asked regarding initial acquisition training, there are a few notable differences. While SOF personnel disagreed ($M = 35.8$) that the materials used in initial acquisition training were free from error, SOF personnel slightly agreed ($M = 53.8$) that the

materials used in sustainment/enhancement training were free from error. Responses to the other items were in the same direction, but there was some variation in response when comparing the two groups.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- Most SOF personnel reported receiving sustainment/enhancement training in their unit's CLP.
- SOF personnel evaluated their instructor for sustainment/enhancement language training positively, although they disagreed that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations into his/her teaching objectives and indicated that the curriculum was not customized for SOF needs.
- Within ARSOF, RC personnel rated their curriculum and instructor more favorably than ARSOF AC personnel overall for sustainment/enhancement language training.
- SOF personnel agreed that the emphasis in their sustainment/enhancement training was on 'Formal language' rather than 'Slant/street language'

Immersion Training Findings

Overall Findings

SOF personnel and unit leaders expressed positive attitudes regarding immersion training. Findings indicate that SOF personnel who have received immersion training and SOF personnel who have not received immersion training overwhelmingly agree that immersion is an effective way to acquire language. Unit leaders also expressed positive attitudes toward immersion training. Both SOF personnel and unit leaders agreed that OCONUS immersion training was more valuable than CONUS immersion training. Both groups also agreed that personnel's proficiency improved as a result of immersion training and that immersion training is the most effective way to acquire a language. Although results indicated a very positive attitude toward immersion, most unit leaders indicated that their unit did not frequently engage in immersion training and the majority of SOF personnel reported that they had never participated in military-provided immersion training.

Unit Leadership Findings

Immersion training was rated favorably as an effective way to acquire and sustain language skills. OCONUS immersion training was viewed more favorably than CONUS iso-immersion, although both types were viewed favorably. Staff officers, in particular, showed a preference for OCONUS immersion training. Additionally, unit leaders felt that their personnel's proficiency improved as a result of their immersion training. Although results indicated a very positive attitude toward immersion, most respondents indicated that their unit did not frequently engage in immersion training. RC leaders sent fewer personnel on immersion training than AC leaders. This confirms other findings from this section that RC personnel have more limited access to training opportunities than AC personnel.

Unit leaders indicated a positive attitude towards immersion training as a tool for language training. Overall, unit leaders strongly agreed ($M = 89.7$) that immersion training is an effective way to acquire language skills. Although unit leaders agreed that both CONUS iso-immersion training ($M = 75.2$) and OCONUS iso-immersion training ($M = 81.0$) should occur regularly as part of sustainment/enhancement training, they disagreed ($M = 39.2$) that

CONUS iso-immersion is equally as effective as OCONUS immersion training. Unit leaders also disagreed ($M = 26.2$) that their unit frequently sends personnel on OCONUS immersion training, although they strongly agreed ($M = 82.7$) that people who have received immersion training show increased proficiency as a result.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Immersion training was indicated as the best mode for sustainment/enhancement language training.
- OCONUS immersion training was viewed more favorably than CONUS iso-immersion.
- Unit leaders indicated that their unit does not frequently send personnel for immersion training. RC unit leaders indicated sending fewer personnel on OCONUS immersion training than AC unit leaders.

SOF Personnel Findings

This section asked SOF personnel to think about their experience with immersion training. Those who had never received immersion training were asked only about their general attitudes toward immersion. Those findings are discussed in 'General Attitudes toward Language Training.' Of the SOF personnel who reported participating in immersion training, 68.4% participated in OCONUS training. Findings from this section indicate that SOF personnel overwhelmingly agree that immersion is an effective way to acquire language. SOF personnel indicated that OCONUS language training has a greater effect on one's language proficiency. Respondents from all groups also disagreed very strongly that immersion was a waste of time. Survey data was insufficient to draw conclusions about the experiences of AFSOF personnel in immersion training. Within ARSOF, AC personnel in SF, CA, and PSYOP personnel subgroups all agreed in their positive evaluation of immersion. Responses from RC personnel were difficult to interpret, due the extremely small number of RC personnel who had received immersion. This confirms comments from open-ended responses that indicate RC personnel often have difficulty gaining access to immersion training.

SOF personnel were asked whether they had participated in immersion training sponsored by the military or government. Those who responded in the affirmative were asked a few specific questions about their experiences with immersion training. SOF personnel who indicated participating in military-provided immersion training strongly agreed ($M = 90.5$) that immersion training is the most effective way to acquire a language and also agreed ($M = 82.1$) that their language proficiency improved as a result of immersion training. SOF personnel strongly disagreed ($M = 16.5$) that OCONUS immersion training is a boondoggle. SOF personnel who participated in OCONUS immersion training agreed more strongly ($M = 87.1$) than SOF personnel who participated in CONUS immersion training ($M = 72.9$) that their language proficiency improved as a result of immersion training. SOF personnel who participated in OCONUS immersion training disagreed much more strongly ($M = 8.9$) than SOF personnel who participated in CONUS immersion training ($M = 38.9$) that OCONUS immersion training is a boondoggle. Regardless of the type of immersion training, SOF personnel who participated in CONUS ($M = 87.5$) and OCONUS ($M = 92.2$) immersion training strongly agreed that immersion training is the most effective way to acquire language skills.

All personnel, regardless of their experience with immersion training were asked about their attitudes toward training. SOF personnel expressed an overwhelmingly positive opinion of immersion as a language training tool. SOF personnel also agreed, although to a lesser

degree, that immersion is often viewed as a motivating tool rather than as a skill enhancer. SOF personnel indicated that the selection process for immersion was unfair, and indicated that iso-immersion was not as effective as OCONUS immersion. AFSOF personnel were often more extreme in their responses, but their responses were in the same general direction as SOF personnel overall. Within ARSOF, RC personnel felt more strongly that selection was unfair, and that immersion training should be a part of regular training.

SOF personnel, regardless of whether or not they had received immersion training paid for or sponsored by the military, moderately disagreed ($M = 41.1$) that selection for OCONUS immersion training is fair and more strongly disagreed ($M = 34.0$) that CONUS iso-immersion is equally as effective as OCONUS immersion. SOF personnel also strongly agreed ($M = 86.3$) that OCONUS immersion training should occur regularly as part of sustainment/enhancement training. SOF personnel moderately agreed ($M = 65.6$) that OCONUS immersion training is used (viewed) as a motivating reward rather than for skill enhancement.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel overwhelmingly agreed that immersion is an effective way to acquire language, and show a preference for OCONUS training rather than CONUS iso-immersion.
- Very few AFSOF personnel or ARSOF RC personnel had participated in immersion training.
- SOF personnel disagreed that selection for immersion is fair, a finding especially pronounced by ARSOF RC personnel.

SECTION 7: ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY

Introduction

This section presents SOF personnel's ability to use foreign language skills on deployment by integrating the evaluations of SOF personnel and unit leaders related language usage capabilities and preparedness. All SOF personnel were asked about the confidence they had in their proficiency with a foreign language. Additionally, SOF personnel were asked to describe how effective their training was in preparing them to use a foreign language on deployment. Unit leaders were asked to evaluate their personnel's ability to perform a variety of language tasks on deployment. For a detailed report of findings from all groups, as well as a complete list of survey questions please see the *Unit Leadership Survey Report, SOF Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report, and Air Force Operator Survey Report*.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. There were total of 158 unit leaders who responded to the survey and were categorized as follows: 57 unit commanders, 16 senior warrant officer advisors/senior enlisted advisors (SWOA/SEAs), 58 staff officers, and 27 command language program managers (CLPMs).

SOF Personnel. All SOF personnel ($N = 327$) were asked to evaluate their personal language proficiency, their confidence to perform certain language-related tasks, and about their general attitudes toward language training. Additionally, SOF personnel who indicated that they had taken a language course and then had been deployed were asked to rate the effectiveness of their training as a result of their experiences while deployed.

Findings

Overall Findings

Overall, unit leaders indicated low-levels of confidence in the language abilities of their personnel. Based on a total of 157 potential respondents, less than half of all unit leaders indicated that their personnel were able to effectively perform a variety of language-related tasks. For example, only 37.3% of unit leaders indicated that their personnel were able to speak effectively and only 19.6% indicated that their personnel are able to use military or technical language effectively. SOF personnel were also not very confident in their language skills beyond the basic conversational level. SOF personnel indicated the lowest levels of confidence regarding their ability to use military language. AFSOF personnel indicated higher levels of confidence than ARSOF personnel, and within ARSOF, RC personnel were less confident than AC personnel.

When evaluating their most recent training experience in which they were deployed after language training, SOF personnel had neutral opinions regarding how well their training prepared them for mission success. SOF personnel who had received pre-deployment language training expressed the most negative opinions regarding the effectiveness of their training, while SOF personnel who received sustainment/enhancement language training before deployment rated their training somewhat better. Unit leaders also agreed that pre-deployment training was not effective in preparing personnel to do well on missions.

Despite the problems that SOF personnel reported with language training, they reported valuing language training and being motivated to do well. Both unit leaders and SOF personnel agreed that language training is essential for success on the job. SOF personnel also reported that they were highly motivated to do well so that they would perform well on the job and because they are accountable to their team. They reported that they were less motivated by the potential for receiving FLPP.

Unit Leadership Findings

Based on a total of 157 potential respondents, less than half of all unit leaders indicated that their personnel were able to effectively perform a variety of language-related tasks. Only 41.8% indicated that SOF personnel were able to listen effectively, 37.3% indicated that their personnel were able to speak effectively, 29.7% respondents indicated that their personnel were able to read effectively, and 12.7% respondents indicated that their personnel were able to write effectively. Furthermore, 27.2% of unit leaders indicated that their personnel are able to use slang effectively, 19.6% indicated that their personnel are able to use military or technical language effectively, and 13.9% indicated that personnel are able to use formal speech. This pattern was consistent for all unit leader subgroups. Due to the fact that all respondents could have selected each option, the small number of unit leaders who selected each option indicates that unit leaders are not very confident in their personnel's language capabilities in their official or required language.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Unit leaders expressed low levels of confidence regarding the language capability of their personnel in their official or required language. For example, only 37.3% of unit leaders indicated that the typical member of their unit was able to speak effectively in their official or required language.
- Unit leaders indicated that pre-deployment training was not successful in getting SOF personnel to achieve the desired level of proficiency.
- Unit leaders indicated that official language training is essential for mission success.

SOF Personnel Findings

Beliefs About Proficiency. In general, SOF personnel were not very confident in their language skills beyond the basic conversational level. SOF personnel expressed the lowest level of confidence in their ability to use military terminology, but were slightly more confident in their ability to use language for informal conversations or courtesy requirements. Tenure did not have a clear effect on confidence. SOF personnel assigned to CAT I/II languages (e.g., Romance languages, German, and Indonesian) had higher confidence in their language proficiency than personnel assigned to CAT III/IV languages (e.g., Japanese, Arabic, Urdu, and Chinese-Mandarin). AFSOF personnel reported feeling more confident in their language skills than ARSOF personnel.

When rating their ability to use military terminology in their AOR language, SOF personnel felt more confident in their ability to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain simple conversations on familiar topics ($M = 68.4$) and less confident in their ability participate in informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics ($M = 52.9$) and to use military terminology ($M = 49.0$). A comparison was also made between personnel assigned to CAT I/II languages and those assigned to CAT III/IV languages. As expected, SOF personnel assigned to CAT III/IV languages expressed lower levels of confidence in

their ability to use military terminology ($M = 37.8$), to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain simple conversations on familiar topics ($M = 59.6$), and to participate in informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics ($M = 40.3$) than personnel assigned to CAT I/II languages ($M = 60.2, 77.8, 65.0$). Comparisons were also made between personnel within different tenure groups. No consistent improvement in confidence was seen as tenure increased.

Training Effectiveness on Deployment. Opinions regarding the efficacy of training were mixed. SOF personnel responded neutrally that the training prepared them for situations they encountered in their missions. Additionally, SOF personnel indicated that they encountered situations in which they could have used additional training. SOF personnel reported that they were most prepared to perform 'Reading' and 'Rapport-building tasks,' and least prepared to perform 'Listening' and 'Speaking tasks.' When responses were separated into initial acquisition, sustainment, and pre-deployment categories, interesting patterns emerged. Evaluations of pre-deployment training were the poorest. Initial acquisition ratings were neutral overall, while sustainment/enhancement training received slightly better ratings. Overall, AFSOF personnel responded similarly when compared with ARSOF personnel. However, no AFSOF personnel participated in training at DLI (Monterey). Within ARSOF, RC and AC personnel responded similarly when rating the effectiveness of their training. PSYOP personnel were the most negative when rating how well the program prepared them to perform mission-related tasks. This is most likely due to the increased language requirements of PSYOP missions, as well as the highly specific vocabulary required for such tasks.

SOF personnel responded neutrally ($M = 49.6$) that the language training that they received prepared them for situations encountered while deployed. Although SOF personnel disagreed ($M = 40.7$) that while deployed they found that they had received incorrect information during language training, they strongly agreed that the encountered situations where more substantial language training should have been required ($M = 76.9$) and responded neutrally ($M = 49.1$) that they were taught in the most up-to-date form of the language.

SOF personnel slightly disagreed ($M = 43.5$) that as a result of language training, they had no problem speaking with local people, asking directions, giving commands, and reserving lodging. The same pattern was observed for other language-related tasks as well. SOF personnel disagreed ($M = 38.8$) that as a result of language training, they had no problem listening to local people, answering their questions, and following local news programs. Overall, it appears that SOF personnel felt most prepared to 'Build rapport' ($M = 50.6$) with local people and perform 'Reading tasks' ($M = 49.6$) and reported feeling less prepared for 'Speaking tasks' ($M = 43.2$) and 'Listening tasks' ($M = 38.0$) as a result of language training.

SOF personnel were asked to respond to items related to training effectiveness on deployment according to training type (i.e. whether the training was initial acquisition, sustainment/enhancement in AOR language, or pre-deployment training in outside AOR language). SOF personnel responded very differently to these items depending on the type of training situation they were using as their frame of reference. SOF personnel who indicated that they received pre-deployment language training disagreed ($M = 39.5$) that the language training they received prepared them for situations commonly encountered while deployed. SOF personnel who indicated receiving initial acquisition training responded neutrally ($M = 49.1$) and SOF personnel who reported receiving sustainment/enhancement language training slightly agreed ($M = 55.7$) with this statement. SOF personnel who answered these items regarding pre-deployment language training disagreed that as a result of language training

they had no problems performing identified 'Listening tasks' ($M = 20.5$), 'Building rapport' ($M = 34.6$), performing identified 'Reading tasks' ($M = 25.7$), and performing identified 'Listening tasks' ($M = 20.5$). SOF personnel who reported receiving initial acquisition language training agreed that as a result of training they were able to perform these tasks, and SOF personnel who reported receiving sustainment/enhancement language training agreed even more highly that language training prepared them to perform the language-related tasks. From these findings, it is clear that SOF personnel who received sustainment/enhancement language training in their official AOR language found their training to prepare them the most effectively for deployment, while SOF personnel who received pre-deployment language training in a language outside of their AOR, believed their training prepared them the least for deployment.

Attitudes toward Importance of Training. SOF personnel value language training, believe it to be essential to success on the job, and put effort into improving their proficiency. AFSOF personnel held these beliefs to an even higher degree. Within ARSOF, RC personnel were very likely to report being willing to sacrifice training allocated to other SOF skills to increase time for language training. AC personnel also reported being willing to do so, although their response was not as strong.

SOF personnel moderately agreed ($M = 77.0$) that language training is essential for success on the job and disagreed ($M = 38.3$) that they do not put much effort into language training. SOF personnel also responded neutrally ($M = 52.7$) that they do not believe language training focuses on the language skills and mission situations important to SOF. SOF personnel also moderately agreed ($M = 56.5$) that they would sacrifice some of the training allocated to their SOF skills training to shift to language proficiency.

Motivation to Train. This section asked SOF personnel to describe the reasons they are motivated to acquire language skills. The most motivating factors overall were the desire to succeed in missions and the fact that they were accountable to their team members. FLPP did not appear to be a highly motivating factor in general. Making language proficiency a criterion for promotions did not appear to be a motivator either. These patterns were consistent within AFSOF and ARSOF, although AFSOF personnel tended to indicate higher levels of agreement. Within ARSOF, RC personnel did not appear to benefit from the FLPP system, and were therefore not motivated by it.

When responding to items asking why they want to succeed in language training, SOF personnel strongly agreed ($M = 85.6$) that they want to succeed in language training so that they will do well on missions and agreed ($M = 76.8$) that they are motivated to succeed in language training because they are accountable to their team for their language abilities. SOF personnel agreed much less ($M = 57.0$) that they are motivated to succeed in language training because they want to receive FLPP. SOF personnel also slightly agreed ($M = 57.0$) that they would be more motivated to perform well in language training if it were a criteria for promotions or would be used in future decisions about their job.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel were not very confident in their language abilities beyond basic conversational skills.
- SOF personnel expressed the lowest level of confidence in their ability to use military terminology, but slightly more confident in their ability to use language for informal conversations or courtesy requirements.

- AFSOF personnel reported feeling more confident in their language skills than ARSOF personnel.
- Within ARSOF, RC personnel were about equally confident in their language abilities when compared with AC personnel, except that SF AC personnel reported being less confident than SF RC personnel. When comparing all ARSOF subgroups, SF AC, SF RC, and CA AC personnel reported being slightly more confident in their language skills than CA RC, PSYOP AC, and PSYOP RC personnel.
- SOF personnel assigned to CAT I/II languages had higher confidence in their language proficiency than personnel assigned to CAT III/IV languages.
- When evaluating their training effectiveness as a result of experiences on deployment, SOF personnel responded neutrally regarding the ability of their language training to prepare them for deployment.
- SOF personnel indicated that they encountered situations on deployment where they could have used additional training.
- SOF personnel indicated that they were most prepared to perform 'Reading tasks' and 'Rapport-building tasks' and that they were least prepared to perform 'Listening tasks' and 'Speaking tasks.'
- When evaluating the effectiveness of training after deployment, SOF personnel had the most favorable evaluations of the effectiveness of sustainment/enhancement training and the least favorable ratings of the effectiveness of pre-deployment training. SOF personnel expressed neutral ratings of the effectiveness of initial acquisition language training.
- Within ARSOF, PSYOP personnel were the most negative when rating how well language training prepared them to perform mission-related tasks.
- Within ARSOF, RC personnel reported a greater willingness to shift some of their training allocated to other SOF skills to increase time for language training.
- SOF personnel indicated that the most motivating factors for language training were the desire to succeed on missions and because they were accountable to their team. FLPP did not appear to be a highly motivating factor.

SECTION 8: USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

This section presents respondents' attitudes toward technology-delivered training (TDT) and machine language translation (MLT) by integrating the perceptions of SOF personnel and unit leaders. Respondents were asked to share their thoughts on the importance and effectiveness of TDT, as well as the most efficient placement of technology in the training pipeline. For detailed findings and a complete list of questions from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report, Air Force Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report,* and the *Unit Leadership Survey Report*.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. A total of 156 Unit Leadership respondents completed this section. Fifty-seven of these were Unit Commanders, 16 were SWOA/SEAs, 56 were Staff Officers, and 27 were CLPMs.

SOF Personnel. All SOF respondents received this set of questions. A total of 327 SOF personnel had the opportunity to respond to this section. Of those who responded, 190 were ARSOF personnel, 15 were AFSOF personnel, and there was also one Navy SEAL respondent.

Findings

Overall Findings

SOF unit leaders and personnel indicated highly similar opinions regarding technology-delivered training (TDT) and machine language translation (MLT). Both groups deemed TDT unfit for the initial acquisition of a language and indicated that classroom training was more appropriate for this purpose. Furthermore, respondents indicated that TDT is used most effectively when supplementing classroom training and should not be used as a replacement for traditional classroom training. Unit leaders reported that TDT is not well-received by personnel and that personnel are reluctant to use it. However, SOF personnel indicated that they would be willing to try TDT even though the indicated that classroom training was more effective. SOF personnel indicated that trainees are more likely to utilize TDT when they are motivated and if it is scheduled, rather than on their personal time.

SOF unit leaders and personnel indicated largely negative opinions related to MLT. Both groups concluded that current MLT is ineffective and that it cannot replace language-trained personnel. Unit leaders reported more experience with MLT than SOF personnel, a finding especially pronounced for CLPM respondents.

Unit Leadership Findings

Opinions regarding the use of technology-delivered training (TDT) varied widely depending on whether the respondents were familiar with TDT. With the exception of staff officers, respondents from the other subgroups who have used TDT actually expressed slightly more negative attitudes than those who have not used TDT regarding TDT's effectiveness as a way for personnel to learn language skills. However, all groups agreed that TDT should not be a substitute for classroom training, although it could be effective as a supplement for classroom

training. Open-ended comments confirmed the finding that personnel believe that TDT is a supplement rather than a substitute for traditional language training options. No group felt that machine language translation (MLT) was an effective way to communicate. All groups, regardless of experience with MLT, agreed that it cannot replace language-trained personnel. RC and AC leaders responded similarly to one another for most issues related to TDT and MLT.

While 81.4% of unit leaders have used TDT, a smaller percentage (55.2%) reported that their unit/command currently uses TDT for language training. Attitudes toward TDT were quite different depending on whether or not respondents had experience with TDT. For example, unit leaders who had experience using TDT strongly agreed ($M = 82.1$) that classroom training is more useful than TDT for language acquisition. On the other hand, those who had not used TDT did not agree as strongly ($M = 67.6$). Both respondents who had experience with TDT and those who did not, strongly agreed that TDT is most effective when supplementing classroom instruction ($M = 80.0$ and $M = 72.2$), suggesting that blended learning (i.e., integration of classroom and computer-based instruction into the course design) might be a good option. These findings indicate a strong consensus that TDT cannot replace classroom instruction. The moderately high level of agreement ($M = 60.9$ and $M = 57.0$) from both groups that their command primarily views TDT as a resource for personnel to use during their off-duty time suggests that TDT is seen primarily as a supplement to other forms of training. Open-ended responses confirm that TDT was considered most useful as a supplement to classroom training.

Only 24.2% of unit leaders have used MLT. Regardless of whether they had or had not used MLT, unit leaders disagreed that MLT is an effective way to communicate ($M = 39.9$ and $M = 41.1$) and also disagreed that MLT is effective for the SOF core tasks that they conduct which require language capability ($M = 39.3$ and $M = 40.9$). Regardless of how much they had used MLT, respondents agreed that MLT shows promise for the future ($M = 61.5$ and $M = 55.8$), but also agreed ($M = 87.2$ and $M = 76.7$) that MLT cannot replace language-trained personnel. From these findings, one may conclude that unit leaders believe that MLT is not an effective tool for SOF tasks and that it cannot replace language-trained personnel.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Unit leaders agreed that technology-delivered training (TDT) should not be used as a replacement for classroom training, although it would be a useful supplement for classroom training.
- With the exception of staff officers, respondents from the other subgroups who have used TDT actually expressed slightly more negative attitudes than those who have not used TDT regarding TDTs effectiveness as a way for SOF personnel to learn language skills.
- Unit leaders disagreed that Machine Language Translation (MLT) was an effective way to communicate.
- Unit leaders agreed that MLT cannot replace language-trained SOF personnel.

SOF Personnel Findings

Findings from this section suggest that SOF personnel have mixed feelings about the role of TDT in language training. In general, SOF personnel viewed TDT as a supplement, rather than a replacement for traditional language training. SOF personnel agreed that they would be willing to try TDT, but felt that traditional training was more effective. SOF personnel

indicated that trainees were more likely to utilize TDT when they are motivated and if it was scheduled (i.e., on duty time), rather than on their personal time. Interestingly, ARSOF RC personnel had less experience with TDT and MLT, but more positive views of both than ARSOF AC personnel. A possible explanation is that TDT enables members of the reserve component to receive training that would otherwise be inaccessible. Attitudes toward MLT were more negative. Despite a very small percentage of respondents having experience with MLT, it was widely believed that MLT was ineffective in serving as a communication tool or in helping to complete SOF core tasks. These findings were consistent in ARSOF and AFSOF personnel groups, as well as subgroups within ARSOF personnel.

Overall, SOF personnel responded neutrally that TDT was an effective way to learn language skills ($M = 52.4$). SOF personnel agreed that for initial acquisition, classroom training is more effective than TDT ($M = 75.6$). They also agreed that TDT is most effective when supplementing classroom instruction ($M = 78.0$). Despite this, SOF personnel moderately agreed that they would be willing to try TDT options if they were available ($M = 66.9$). They indicated being more likely to try TDT if it was scheduled during duty hours, as opposed to on their own time ($M = 74.5$). They also agreed that TDT is only effective when trainees are motivated ($M = 75.4$).

Overall, opinions toward MLT were fairly negative. However, only 11.6% of SOF personnel who responded to the survey indicated that they had ever used MLT. SOF personnel disagreed that MLT was an effective way to communicate ($M = 39.3$) and that MLT was effective for performing their SOF core tasks ($M = 38.1$). SOF personnel responded neutrally that MLT showed promise for the future ($M = 49.8$), but agreed that MLT could not replace human linguists ($M = 76.9$).

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel viewed technology-delivered training (TDT) as a supplement rather than a replacement for traditional language training.
- SOF personnel indicated that trainees were more likely to utilize TDT when they are motivated and if it was scheduled (i.e., on duty time), rather than on their personal time.
- SOF personnel indicated that machine language translation (MLT) was ineffective in serving as a communication tool or in helping to complete SOF core tasks.
- ARSOF RC personnel who responded to the survey had less experience with TDT and MLT, but more positive views of both. A possible explanation is that TDT enables members of reserve components to receive training that would otherwise be inaccessible.

SECTION 9: ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND SUPPORT

Introduction

This section presents respondents' perceptions of organizational climate and support related to language. SOF personnel and unit leaders were instructed to assign a letter grade (i.e., A, B, C, D, or F) related to how well their chains of command provide support for language training. This section focuses on integrating the perceptions of SOF personnel and unit leaders related how well their chains of command perform in terms of organizational support of language. For detailed findings and a complete list of questions from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report, Air Force Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report,* and the *Unit Leadership Survey Report*.

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. A total of 154 Unit Leadership respondents completed this section. Fifty-six of these were Unit Commanders, 15 were SWOA/SEAs, 56 were Staff Officers, and 27 were CLPMs.

SOF Personnel. A total of 327 SOF personnel had the opportunity to respond to this section. There were 28 AFSOF personnel and 289 ARSOF personnel who responded. There was also one Navy SEAL respondent.

Findings

Overall Findings

Both unit leaders and SOF personnel assigned low ratings (i.e., a large percentage of D's or F's) when rating their chains of command in terms of organizational support for language. Unit leaders were more likely to report favorable ratings of their unit/command than SOF personnel. Overall grades given by SOF personnel were very poor, while those given by unit leaders were not quite as negative. Both groups gave more favorable (although still largely negative) ratings related to how well their command provides language learning materials and how well they emphasize taking the DLPT on time. Unit leaders indicated that their unit/command needs improvement in allocating more duty hours to training or practice and ensuring that personnel in language training are not pulled for non-critical details. SOF personnel indicated that their command needs improvement in providing awards and recognition related to language, encouraging the use of language during non-language training, and finding ways to increase time for language training.

Unit Leadership Findings

Overall, unit leaders assigned low ratings (i.e., a large percentage of D's or F's) when asked to grade their command's level of support for specific statements related to language and language training. It was clear from their responses that some elements of support related to language in their unit/command showed a stronger need for improvement than others. Areas that appear to need the most improvement include allocating more duty hours to training or practice and ensuring that personnel in training are not pulled for non-critical details. Although none of the results can be classified as positive, areas that received higher ratings included providing language learning materials, ensuring that quality instruction is available, placing emphasis on taking the DLPT on time, providing pre-deployment training, and

ensuring that job aids or interpreters are available for personnel on deployment. These responses indicate that unit leaders believe that their chains of command are doing a relatively more satisfactory job in these areas than in some of the other areas of language support. Responses for other dimensions, however, suggest that they believe there is room for improvement in those areas. One area that received low grades was 'Allocating duty hours to training or practice.' Another was 'Ensuring that personnel in training are not pulled for non-critical details.' These responses seem to suggest that unit leaders recognize areas that need to be improved but that may be out of their unit/command's control, such as the allocation of duty hours to training. Areas they did have control over tended to receive relatively higher grades. Open-ended comments from this section confirmed this finding. Many respondents indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to place more emphasis on language, but did not have the resources or command emphasis to do so.

CLPMs were asked to provide additional ratings of the leaders in their unit/command and findings showed that CLPMs believe that their command emphasizes the importance of language and that providing language resources has an impact on the command's reputation. CLPMs also reported being motivated to monitor the quality of training based on their own deployment experiences.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Overall, unit leaders assigned low ratings (i.e., a large percentage of D's or F's) when asked to grade their command's level of support for specific statements related to language and language training.
- Areas that appear to need the most improvement include (1) allocating more duty hours to training or practice and (2) ensuring that personnel in training are not pulled for non-critical details.
- Areas that received higher (although still low) ratings included (1) providing language learning materials, (2) ensuring that quality instruction is available, (3) placing emphasis on taking the DLPT on time, (4) providing pre-deployment training, and (5) ensuring that job aids or interpreters are available for SOF personnel on deployment.
- Open-ended comments suggested that unit leaders would welcome the opportunity to place more emphasis on language, but did not have the resources or support to do so.

SOF Personnel Findings

Findings showed that commands in the SOF community have much room for improvement. Areas that were of greatest concern overall were providing recognition and awards related to language, finding ways to increase time for language training, and encouraging the use of language during non-language training. The areas that received more favorable ratings (although still somewhat negative) were placing emphasis on taking the DLPT on time and providing language learning materials. AFSOF personnel were more positive in their ratings overall, especially for encouragement of language use during non-language training. Within ARSOF, RC personnel were more negative in their ratings in general, especially regarding the allocation of duty hours for training and placing emphasis on the DLPT. Grades differed within the SF, CA and PSYOP personnel groups, with PSYOP AC personnel generally being more favorable, and CA AC personnel being the least favorable. However, few A's were assigned in any category of organizational support for language. Interestingly, responses from non-SOF linguists who took the survey were similar, suggesting command support for language could be improved across the military.

The grades assigned by SOF personnel were for the most part very negative. Looking across all dimensions of organizational support presented on the survey, there were more D's and F's assigned than A's, B's, or C's. Areas that received more unfavorable ratings (i.e., mostly D's and F's) were providing recognition and awards related to language (74.8% D's and F's), finding ways to increase time for language training (63.8% D's and F's), and encouraging the use of language during non-language training (62.4% D's and F's) Areas that received more favorable ratings included how well the command places emphasis on taking the DLPT on time (33.7% D's and F's) and provides language learning materials (47.3% D's and F's). Although these two areas received more favorable ratings than the other dimensions of organizational support, overall the ratings of organizational support were negative.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- SOF personnel's overall ratings of command support were generally low.
- Areas that received positive ratings (although still somewhat negative) were emphasizing the DLPT and providing language learning materials.
- Areas that needed the most improvement were providing recognition and awards related to language, finding ways to increase time for language training, and encouraging the use of language during non-language training.
- AFSOF personnel were more positive in their ratings overall, especially for encouragement of language use during non-language training.
- ARSOF RC personnel were generally less positive in their grades of command support.
- Within ARSOF, there were some differences between SF, CA, and PSYOP personnel when rating the quality of their organizational support. Grades differed within the SF, CA and PSYOP personnel groups, with PSYOP AC personnel generally being more favorable, and CA AC personnel being the least favorable.
- Interestingly, responses from non-SOF linguists who took the survey were similar, suggesting command support for language could be improved across the military.

SECTION 10: LANGUAGE AND ATTRITION

Introduction

SOF personnel were asked about their intent to leave SOF and if language concerns played a role in their decision. Unit leaders were asked whether they believed that language influenced their personnel's decisions to leave SOF. For detailed findings and a complete list of questions from each survey, please see the *SOF Operator Survey Report, Air Force Operator Survey Report, Army Operator Survey Report,* and the *Unit Leadership Survey Report.*

Respondents

SOF Unit Leaders. A total of 154 Unit Leadership respondents received this section. Fifty-six of these were Unit Commanders, 16 were SWOA/SEAs, 55 were Staff Officers, and 27 were CLPMs.

SOF Personnel. A total of 327 SOF personnel were given the opportunity to respond to this section. There were 26 AFSOF personnel and 272 ARSOF personnel who responded. There was also one Navy SEAL respondent.

Findings

Overall Findings

The results from this section indicate that language requirements and language compensation have little to do with SOF personnel's intentions to leave SOF. The findings from unit leaders and SOF personnel also suggest that in general, unit leaders are accurate in their assessment of SOF personnel in their command with regard to their intent to leave SOF, with the exception RC unit leaders. Unit leader's evaluation of RC personnel was that they had lower intent to leave, while by their own report, RC personnel had higher intent to leave than their AC counterparts. In sum, language appears to have a very minor impact on intentions to leave SOF.

Unit Leadership Findings

The results from this section indicated that unit leaders believe that language requirements have little to do with their personnel's intentions to leave SOF. Staff officers and CLPMs slightly agreed that personnel in their unit/command frequently consider leaving SOF to pursue a job in the civilian world with higher compensation, while Unit commanders and SWOA/SEAs disagreed. The same finding was evident for RC and AC leaders. RC leaders indicated that members of their unit/command were likely to leave to pursue higher compensation in the civilian world.

When responding to items regarding language and attrition, unit leaders indicated that they did not believe that members of their unit/command would leave SOF as a result of issues related to language training. Overall unit leaders disagreed ($M = 28.6$) that members of their unit/command intend to leave SOF because they are unable to get the training they need. Unit leaders also agreed ($M = 68.7$) that the re-enlistment decisions made by members of their unit have nothing to do with language proficiency or language issues. Unit leaders differed somewhat in their responses to one item. While unit commanders and SWOA/SEAs disagreed that members of their unit/command frequently consider leaving SOF to pursue a

job in the civilian world with higher compensation ($M = 41.8$ and $M = 39.1$), staff officers and CLPMs agreed slightly more ($M = 55.3$ and $M = 54.2$) with this statement.

Summary of Unit Leadership Findings

- Unit leaders believe that language requirements have little to do with their personnel's intentions to leave SOF.
- Staff officers and CLPMs slightly agreed that personnel in their unit/command frequently consider leaving SOF to pursue a job in the civilian world with higher compensation, while unit commanders and SWOA/SEAs slightly disagreed.
- RC unit leaders indicated that members of their unit/command were likely to leave to pursue higher compensation in the civilian world.

SOF Personnel Findings

Findings from this section indicate that issues related to language training did not appear to influence overall intentions to leave SOF. In general, SOF personnel had intentions of re-enlisting. AFSOF personnel indicated that language played a slightly larger role in their decisions than ARSOF personnel. Additionally, AFSOF personnel were more likely to indicate that they had considered pursuing a more highly paid civilian career. Within ARSOF, RC personnel were more likely to indicate that they had considered leaving SOF due to language-related issues. This was especially true for the PSYOP RC personnel subgroup.

Overall intent to leave SOF as reported by SOF personnel was quite low. Findings from this section indicated that issues related to language training did not result in intentions to leave SOF. SOF personnel strongly disagreed that they intended to leave SOF if language requirements are increased ($M = 18.6$). They also disagreed that they intended to leave SOF if they were unable to get the language training they needed ($M = 22.8$). Moderate disagreement was expressed that they had considered leaving SOF to pursue a job in the civilian world where their skills would be highly compensated ($M = 41.2$) or that their decision to re-enlist in SOF was based in part on issues relating to language proficiency ($M = 36.0$). In general, SOF personnel had high intentions of re-enlisting in SOF ($M = 72.0$).

Responses were also analyzed according to the respondent's tenure with SOF. Overall, respondents who reported less tenure in SOF (i.e., 0-4 years) indicated higher intentions to leave SOF. For example, when answering the item that attributed one's decision to re-enlist in SOF to language issues, SOF personnel with less tenure agreed more ($M = 42.3$) than respondents with more tenure ($M = 25.0$), although both groups disagreed. However, there was little difference between tenure groups for overall intention to re-enlist.

Summary of SOF Personnel Findings

- Issues related to language training did not appear to influence overall intentions to leave SOF and in general, SOF personnel had intentions of re-enlisting.
- AFSOF personnel indicated that language issues played a slightly larger role in their decisions to leave SOF than ARSOF personnel.
- AFSOF personnel were more likely to indicate that they had considered leaving SOF to pursue a higher-paid civilian career.

- Within ARSOF, RC personnel were more likely to indicate that they had considered leaving SOF due to language-related issues. This was especially true for the PSYOP RC personnel subgroup.

SUMMARY

In summary, unit leaders and SOF personnel agree that language training is essential for optimal mission performance but that the current state of language training is not meeting the needs of all personnel and missions. Knowing how language is used on deployment, and knowing that it is not used in the same way depending on the SOF personnel type and the mission type should guide decision makers to make changes that will aid personnel in achieving higher performance on the job. The *Final Project Report* integrates the survey findings with the focus group data and provides some interpretation and recommendations.

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Appendix A: Overview of Other Reports

Final Project Report (Technical Report # 20040606)

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to integrate findings from the various data collection components of the *Special Operations Forces Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* (i.e., focus groups and surveys) as well as present some broad recommendations based on those findings.

Participants

There were a total of 145 individuals participating in focus groups which ranged in size from 3-11 individuals. Of these 21 focus groups, 14 were AC SOF units and 7 were RC units.

There were a total of 327 SOF personnel from the Air Force, Army, and Navy who responded to the *SOF Operator Survey*. The majority, 857 respondents were personnel from the Army, while 41 were from the Air Force, and only one respondent was from the Navy.

There were a total of 158 unit leadership respondents, 57 were unit commanders, 16 were SWOA/SEAs, 58 were staff officers, and 27 were CLPMs.

Selected Findings and Recommendations

- Finding: Results indicate that the importance and frequency of language tasks performed and skills utilized and the required level of proficiency varies somewhat according to SOF personnel type, unit, core SOF task, location, and language.
  - o *Recommendation: Language training should be customized to meet the needs of different SOF personnel types to the extent possible.*

- Finding: Both SOF unit leaders and personnel expressed negative opinions about the ability of pre-deployment training to prepare personnel for mission success, especially on outside AOR missions.
  - o *Recommendation: Due to the limited time for pre-deployment training, customization is especially important in this context. Provide more focused language training for missions outside of SOF personnel's AOR by customizing training based on SOF core task, mission location, and mission language as soon as this information is available.*

- Finding: SOF personnel indicated that the curriculum (regardless of training type or location) often contained errors.
  - o *Recommendation: SOF leaders need to ensure the selection or development of up-to-date and error free curricula that reflect the way language is currently used in the AOR to which the training is relevant.*

Unit Leadership Survey Report (Technical Report # 20040604)

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present findings from a survey designed and administered to members of unit leadership. This group included individuals classified as unit commanders, senior warrant officer advisors/senior enlisted advisors (SWOA/SEAs), staff officers, and command language program managers (CLPMs). The survey attempted to gather information regarding attitudes toward language use on deployment, interpreters, deployments outside of their unit/command's AOR, language training received by members of their unit/command, official language testing, FLPP, technology, organizational support, attitudes toward SOFLO, and attrition intentions by members of their unit/command.

Participants

There were a total of 158 unit leadership respondents, 57 were unit commanders, 16 were SWOA/SEAs, 58 were staff officers, and 27 were CLPMs.

Selected Findings

- All unit leadership groups indicated that their units were too dependent on interpreters and agreed that the personnel in their unit would depend less on interpreters if they had higher levels of language proficiency.
- Unit leaders do not believe that personnel arrive at their command mission capable in their AOR language after receiving initial acquisition language training.
- Many unit leaders were dissatisfied with the quality of their CLP and believe that more money needs to be invested in the CLP.
- Immersion training was indicated as the best mode for sustainment and enhancement language training.
- Unit leaders placed a high level of importance on DLPT scores, but did not believe the DLPT is highly related to mission performance. This is most likely because it is an official requirement.
- Unit leaders did not believe that FLPP was an effective motivator for personnel, although they agreed that the procedures for assigning FLPP uphold the intent of motivating proficiency.
- Unit leadership groups agreed that technology-delivered training (TDT) should not be used as a replacement for classroom training, although it would be a useful supplement for classroom training.
- CLPMs indicated that their unit/command leadership speaks to the importance of language and also indicated that they are aware that their provision of resources to personnel has an impact on the command's reputation.

SOF Operator Survey Report (Technical Report # 20040603)

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to highlight and compare findings from SOF personnel in the Air Force, Army, and Navy regarding attitudes toward language use on deployment, interpreters, deployments outside of their AOR, language training, official language testing, FLPP, technology, organizational support, and attrition.

Participants

There were a total of 327 SOF personnel from the Air Force, Army, and Navy who responded to the SOF Operator Survey. The majority, 90.8% were personnel from the Army, while 8.9% were from the Air Force, and only one respondent was from the Navy.

Selected Findings

- SOF personnel indicated that the most frequent and important use of language skills on deployment was 'Building rapport.' AFSOF personnel indicated that 'Military-technical vocabulary' was the most important and frequently used function, while ARSOF personnel indicated that 'Building rapport' was the most important and frequently used function.
- AFSOF personnel felt that they were prepared for their most recent mission, but ARSOF personnel did not.
- ARSOF personnel were more likely than AFSOF personnel to report frequent use of interpreters both inside and outside of their AOR.
- SOF personnel who received FLPP had higher evaluations of its fairness, simplicity, and ability to motivate when compared to personnel who did not receive FLPP, although their opinions were still neutral.
- SOF personnel evaluated their instructor for initial acquisition language training and sustainment and enhancement language training positively, although they disagreed that the instructor incorporated SOF considerations into his/her teaching objectives and indicated that the curriculum was not customized for SOF needs.
- While AFSOF personnel agreed that their chain of command cares about their language proficiency, ARSOF personnel disagreed.

Air Force Operator Survey Report (Technical Report # 20040602)

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present findings from Air Force respondents to the survey designed and administered to collect data related to language usage, training, issues, and policies from SOF personnel. Some specific area assessed were attitudes toward language use on deployment, the use of interpreters, language training efficacy, official language testing, FLPP, technology, and organizational support for language. Although the survey was designed for and targeted specifically to SOF personnel, there were a small number of other respondents including an MI Soldier assigned to a SOF unit, non-SOF linguists, SOF other, and non-SOF other respondents. Due to the small number of respondents in these categories, they were combined into one group, which is labeled AFSOF other and presented in the report to serve as a comparison with AFSOF personnel.

Participants

There were a total of 41 respondents from the Air Force to the *SOF Operator Survey*. The majority of respondents (29) were AFSOF personnel. The remaining respondents were classified as AFSOF other.

Selected Findings

- 'Military-technical language' was rated as important and used frequently by AFSOF personnel on deployments.
- AFSOF personnel are fairly confident in their ability to satisfy minimum language requirements. AFSOF personnel are less confident in their ability to use military terminology and conversational skills.
- AFSOF personnel expressed neutral opinions toward the DLPT. However, low opinions of the DLPT's relatedness to missions did not translate into lower motivation to do well on the test.
- AFSOF personnel suggested increasing the amount of training provided and measuring speaking ability as good ways to improve the FLPP system.
- AFSOF personnel felt only moderately competent in performing basic tasks, and did not feel competent performing more complex language tasks on deployment as a result of their language training.
- AFSOF personnel indicated that although their command cares about their language proficiency, that there was a lack of command support for language training.

Army Operator Survey Report (Technical Report # 20040601)

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present findings from Army respondents to the survey designed for and administered to SOF personnel regarding attitudes toward language use on deployment, interpreters, deployments outside of their AOR, language training, official language testing, FLPP, technology, organizational support, and attrition. Although the survey was designed for and targeted specifically to SOF personnel, there were respondents from several other groups. Responses from ARSOF other respondents, which included SOF support, SOF other, and MI Soldiers assigned to a SOF unit and responses from non-SOF linguists were presented in this report in order to serve as a comparison with ARSOF personnel.

Participants

There were a total of 857 respondents who indicated that the Army was their mother service. Of the 857 respondents from the Army, 297 were SOF personnel, 56 were military intelligence organic to SOF units, 35 were SOF support, and 325 were non-SOF language professionals. The ARSOF personnel who responded were categorized as being SF, CA, or PSYOP personnel in active or reserve components. Of the 297 ARSOF personnel who responded, 120 were SF AC personnel, 48 were SF RC personnel, 14 were CA AC personnel, 46 were CA RC personnel, 45 were PSYOP AC personnel, and 24 were PSYOP RC personnel.

Major Findings

- ARSOF personnel rated 'Building rapport' as the most frequently used and most important language function while on deployment. However, PSYOP AC personnel rated 'Basic reading tasks' as the most frequently used and 'Basic listening tasks' as the most important language function while on deployment.
- ARSOF personnel showed a much stronger dependence on interpreters than ARSOF other respondents.
- ARSOF RC personnel reported feeling less prepared than AC counterparts in terms of language and cultural understanding.

- RC personnel tended to have higher regard for the DLPT than AC personnel, although both AC and RC personnel felt it was important to do well.
- ARSOF personnel believe that they could have used more training before deployment, and that they were only moderately effective in their communication skills as a result of training.
- SF RC and PSYOP RC personnel had lower opinions of their command's support for language than their AC counterparts. CA AC personnel had lower opinions of their command's support for language training than CA RC personnel.
- ARSOF other respondents assigned the most negative ratings of their command when compared to other groups. Non-SOF other respondents assigned more negative ratings when compared to non-SOF linguists and ARSOF personnel.

SOFLO Focus Group Data Analysis Technical Report (Technical Report # 20040501)

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to present findings from a series of 21 focus groups that were conducted in order to evaluate the current state of foreign language usage and training across the SOF community. Focus groups lasted three hours and topic areas that were covered included the way language training has been used in the field, types of tasks and proficiency needed on deployments, experiences with language training, and suggestions for improving training and overcoming barriers to language proficiency. These focus group results served as a basis for the development of the *SOF Operator Survey*.

Participants

There were a total of 145 individuals participating in focus groups which ranged in size from 3-11 individuals. Of these 21 focus groups, 14 were AC SOF units and 7 were RC units. Specifically, three units (one AC and two RC) represented PSYOP, eight (six AC, two RC) represented Army SF units, two (both AC) represented AFSOF, four (one AC, three RC) represented CA, two (both AC) represented Navy SEAL units, one (AC) unit represented Naval Special Warfare Command Surface Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen (NAVSPECWARCOM SWCC), and one (AC) represented Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS).

Selected Findings
- Having enough conversational language proficiency to build rapport was reported as important by SOF personnel.
- The diversity of missions and areas of operation within the SOF community presents challenges for language training and sustainment. Even within Special Forces, there are distinct differences in language usage and requirements across the various Groups. This makes a one-size-fits-all solution problematic.
- Issues in dealing with interpreters were reported frequently.
- Frustration with the substantial proficiency requirements needed to receive FLPP was reported.
- Language learning tools or training options are not always available to personnel or flexible enough to accommodate their schedules when they have time to train. The availability of tools and training options is not uniform across SOF.
- Unit commanders do not necessarily place emphasis on and provide support for language training.

Appendix B: Layman's Understanding of ILR Language Skill Level D

1. Listening proficiency:
    0+ level = understands with difficulty even native speakers who are used to dealing with foreigners; familiar with short memorized utterances or formulae

    1 level = understands very simple conversations consisting mostly of questions and answers; requires repetition, rewording, slower-than-normal speech

    2 level = understands conversations about everyday topics, e.g. personal information, current events, etc.; understands native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners although some repetition and rewording are necessary

    3 level = understands all speech in a standard dialect, e.g. conversations, phone calls, radio/TV broadcasts, public addresses; understands inferences; rarely has to ask for paraphrasing or explanations

    4 level = understands all styles and forms of speech pertinent to professional needs; may have trouble with extreme dialect, some slang, and speech marked by inference

    5 level = all forms and styles of speech understandable and is equal to that of a well-educated native listener

2. Speaking proficiency:
    0+ level = can use memorized questions and statements; severely limited even with native speakers used to dealing with foreigners

    1 level = can create with the language, e.g. ask and answer questions, participate in short conversations; familiar with everyday survival topics and courtesy requirements

    2 level = able to fully participate in casual conversations; can express facts, give instructions, describe, report on and provide narration about current, past, and future activities; familiar with concrete topics, e.g. family, interests, own background, work, travel, and current events

    3 level = can converse in formal and informal situations, resolve problem situations, provide explanations, describe in detail, offer supported opinions and hypothesize; familiar with practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; only makes sporadic errors in basic structures

    4 level = can tailor language to fit audience; can counsel, persuade, negotiate, represent a point of view, and interpret for dignitaries; familiar with all topics pertinent to professional needs; nearly equivalent to an educated native speaker

    5 level = speaking is equivalent to an educated native speaker

3. Reading proficiency:
    0+ level = recognize numbers, isolated words and phrases, names, street signs, office and shop designations

    1 level = understands simplest connected prose, e.g. simple narratives of routine behavior and highly predictable descriptions; sometimes misunderstands even simplest text

2 level = understands simple, factual, authentic frequently recurring material, e.g. recurring news items, social notices; can locate and understand main ideas and details in material written for general reader

3 level = understands authentic prose on a variety of unfamiliar subjects, e.g. news stories, routine correspondence, materials in his/her professional field; can almost always interpret material, relate ideas, and make inferences

4 level = understands all styles and forms of prose relevant to professional needs or for the general reader whether printed or legibly handwritten; proficiency is nearly that of a well-educated native reader

5 level = understands all prose at the level of a well-educated native reader

Note. This information is a summary of the ILR Language Skill Level Descriptions provided by Mark Overton (see Appendix D: Interagency Language Roundtable Language Skill Level Descriptions of the *Personnel Selection and Classification: Army Linguist Management* report for a more detailed description of these ILR levels).

Appendix C: About Surface, Ward & Associates

Surface, Ward & Associates (SWA) is an organizational research and consulting firm based in Raleigh, NC. Since 1997, SWA has been applying the principles, research, and methods of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology to assist organizations and their employees in enhancing their performance, solving work-related problems, and addressing workplace issues. SWA consults and conducts research in areas related to (1) training and development, (2) performance measurement and management, (3) organizational effectiveness and development, (4) human resources development and management, and (5) work-related language proficiency, performance assessment, and training. Our firm is lead by I/O psychologist Dr. Eric A. Surface, who has conducted research and consulted on these issues since 1995.

SWA is structured as a consulting and research network, allowing our core personnel to utilize numerous associates around the country with specialized expertise as needed on a project-by-project basis. SWA has two principals, three part-time employees, and numerous contractors who work on client projects. Our clients have included: Building Construction Products Division, Caterpillar, Inc; North Carolina Cooperative Education Association; seven divisions and the North American staffing organization of IBM; the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL); the United States Special Operations Command (USASOC); and the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO).

One of SWA's areas of specialization relates to the measurement of foreign or second language proficiency and the evaluation and effectiveness of foreign or second language training, training tools, and job aids in work contexts. In this area, SWA holds contracts with Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Currently, SWA is evaluating the effectiveness of language training across the SOF community for SOFLO and conducting a study of the effectiveness of ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) rater training. SWA recently completed the large-scale *SOF Language Needs Assessment Project* and several small archival data studies related to the predictive validity of language aptitude and proficiency tests used by the military. SWA previously completed reliability studies of the ACTFL OPI and ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT). The results of the OPI reliability study were published in the *Foreign Language Annals* (see Surface & Dierdorff, 2003), and much of our other language-related work has been presented at conferences, including the Department of Defense Language Conference.

Our commitment to conducting model-based research and data-based consulting and to using cutting-edge methodologies sets us apart from many other firms. Being trained as scientist-practitioners, we realize that our clients benefit from having the best quality data and analysis in order to make solid, data-driven decisions. Our goal is to provide our clients with the best research and consulting possible given the constraints of their situations to enhance their mission or business objectives. For more information, about Surface, Ward & Associates, please contact our lead principal, Dr. Eric A. Surface.

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